



BABY HOME

Little Harrison has left hospital



PAGE 3

WISE MOVE

Moore backs new player Wisdom



PAGE 40

400 extra places to be created at schools

PLANS to expand three schools to admit almost 400 extra pupils have been approved.

Dudley Council is facing a growing demand for school spaces and education boss Councillor Tim Crumpton has now given the go-ahead for proposals for 210 extra places at Sledmere Primary School in Dudley.

Under the plans bosses will also create an additional 105 places for Gigg Mill Primary in Stourbridge and 70 for Kate's Hill Primary School. They would be available in September 2015.

The plans come as officers predict a surge in demand for primary school places over the next three years and they want to ensure there are enough available spaces in the borough's schools.

They are predicting demand for an additional 1,000 spaces.

Council officers are also considering providing extra spaces at Hob Green Primary School in Stourbridge, Howley Grange Primary School in Halesowen and Netherton Primary School next year.

Councillor Crumpton said: "Dudley is continuing to experience a consistent increase in the numbers of primary aged children requiring a school place."

Rider critical after accident

A MOTORCYCLIST from Cradley Heath is in a critical condition in hospital after a crash in Staffordshire.

The 52-year-old man was airlifted to the University Hospital of North Staffordshire in Stoke-on-Trent after he and his blue Suzuki motorcycle were found on the southbound carriageway of the A38 near the Barton-under-Needwood junction.

Police are appealing for witnesses to the incident that happened at around 2pm on Sunday.

MOSQUE APPEAL OVER MINARETS

TWO 29ft minarets and a domed roof will not be built on top of a mosque in Halesowen after hundreds of objections from residents.

The plans by Muslim leaders to extend The Baitul Ghafoor Mosque on Long Lane have been thrown out by Dudley Council but a mosque spokesman said they now intend to appeal as they believe the application has 'not been assessed properly'.

More than 225 residents signed a petition opposing the plans, fearing the minarets and dome would be out of keeping with the building, which is a former Methodist church.

Appeal

There were also concerns the development would increase the profile of the mosque and lead to more visitors as well as increased noise and traffic.

Dudley Council has refused planning permission for the minarets and dome, saying work would be 'highly inappropriate and immensely damaging' to the building.

But mosque leaders hit back at the complaints, saying all they wanted were the symbols of an Islamic mosque and described them as being the equivalent of a church spire.

They will appeal against the council decision.

The Ahmadiyya Mosque was opened at the former Methodist Church two years ago and in May leaders applied for planning permission to add a central dome and minarets.

Halesowen North Councillor Karen Shakespeare said: "I had a lot of resi-

By Katy-Rose Meaney

dents contact me and I fully supported them. I am really pleased it has been refused.

"It doesn't affect their worship and I hope they won't appeal because they are keen to work as part of the community."

She added: "I hope they understand now that it is not something the community feel is right for the area."

However, Dr Muhammad Ashraf from The Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, which is behind the application, said he believes the plans were opposed by residents who misunderstand Islam.

Dr Ashraf claims that hatred towards the religion is more of a reason than the effects on the landscape of the minarets and dome roof.

He said: "The local people don't know the facts. Islam is a peaceful religion and the Muslims here are peace loving people. We do a lot for the community."

"We will be appealing. Justice is for everybody not just a few people."

"All we are asking for is the symbols of our community, they are the symbols of an Islamic mosque, just like a church spire. I think the application has not been assessed properly by the council."

Tributes to comedy legend Tommy



A proper Black Countryman who made the region loff — comedian Tommy Mundon from Halesowen

THE Black Country has been mourning comic Tommy Mundon, who has died aged 80 after a five-year battle against Parkinson's disease.

Tributes poured in from the showbiz world including fellow veteran comic Ken Dodd and Alan 'Aynuk' Smith who called him 'an ambassador for the Black Country'.

Mr Mundon, one of the stars of the Black Country Night Out, died on Monday morning at Mary Stevens Hospice, in Stourbridge, where he was receiving palliative care.

He leaves wife of 42 years Val, daughter Caroline and three grand-

children, Daniel, nine, Lucy, seven, and 18-month-old William.

The funnyman from Halesowen was a regular on the comedy circuit for 50 years but he had to quit two years ago.

"I'm now a stand-up comedian who can't stand up for long," quipped Tommy.

Friend

The king of Black Country comedy died four months after celebrating his 80th birthday.

Ken Dodd, a close friend of Tommy's for more than 20 years, paid tribute to the man who spent more than half a

century making the Black Country laugh. "He was a wonderful friend and a wonderful comedian. And he was more than a comedian, he was a humorist, he knew all the Black Country stories. He was down-to-earth and amusing, with a great love of life."

Friend Alan Smith, known under his stage name Aynuk, had appeared with him on stage numerous times over the past 50 years.

The 76-year-old from Netherton, recalled Tommy's pride in the Black Country. "Tommy was a proper Black Countryman," he said.

● Farewell Tommy — See Page 6

Campaign deadline to raise £10,000

CAMPAIGNERS have just 12 weeks to raise £10,000 to buy an historic walled garden in Halesowen.

The Halesowen Abbey Trust are poised to sign an agreement to buy contract with Leasowes Estate site owners Birmingham Metropolitan College this week.

The heritage group will then have just three months to raise the rest of the purchase price and complete the deal.

To buy the historic garden, which dates back to 1790, the community group originally needed £20,000 but after a £10,000 donation by A & J Mucklow Group Plc, the community group have until mid October to raise the outstanding funds.

Mick Freer, acting honorary secretary of the trust, is confident it can be done.

He said: "We have had some very generous individual donations but we still need support. There is a risk because if we do not raise the remainder we will lose the deposit but I am not going to let that happen. One way or another we will raise the money, I am sure of it."

Campaigners are holding a fundraising concert on August 16 at Halesowen Athletics and Cycling Club. For more information call 07952406378.

1,000 are fed by foodbank

A FOODBANK has helped more than 1,000 people in 12 months. The news came as a collection took place for the Trussell Trust Quinton & Oldbury Foodbank.

It was held at the Ridgacre Quinton Tesco where customers were asked to donate non-perishable food items such as cereals and tinned fruit.

More than 30 volunteers from the foodbank joined Tesco staff in store to collect donations from customers. Tesco topped up donations.

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CONTENTS	
Peter Rhodes	4
Letters	7
Memory Lane	10
Focus on Cradley	14
What's On	21
TV Guide	22 - 24
Puzzler	25
Property	26
Motoring	29
Sport	39 & 40

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Tributes are paid to popular journalist

A HUGE popular sub-editor who worked at the Express & Star for 16 years has died.

Emma Farmer, 45, worked on the Wolverhampton Magazine and was previously the newspaper's features editor.

She died on July 10 having been suddenly taken seriously ill the week before while fishing with her partner, Stan Talbot, 63, to mark

her birthday. Mr Talbot, of Hammerwich, said: "She had just caught the biggest carp either of us had ever seen. She'd sometimes say 'come and help me with this' but this time she said she wasn't feeling well. Then she collapsed."

Miss Farmer had suffered a sub-arachnoid haemorrhage, a type of stroke. She underwent emergency surgery but nothing more could

be done to save her. Mr Talbot, a builder, paid tribute to his partner of two years. He said: "Emma loved life and she loved people."

Miss Farmer was a keen athlete in her youth, competing in hurdling. She grew up in East Riding in Yorkshire, one of two daughters born to parents Colin and Pat. She joined the Express & Star in 1998, after working for the Press Association.

Express & Star editor Keith Harrison said: "Emma was a hugely popular and talented member of the team." Columnist Peter Rhodes, who worked with Emma for more than a decade, said: "She had a wonderfully dry north country sense of humour and she will be terribly missed."

The funeral at Streety Crematorium is tomorrow (Friday) 11.15am.

Bid to cut council places by a third is scrapped

PROPOSALS to cut the number of councillors serving Dudley by a third has been scrapped after claims other authorities would have to follow suit.

A total of 72 councillors have seats on Dudley Council, three per ward. Opposition councillors tabled motions to cut this to 48 in a bid to save money.

Conservatives wanted the number of elections in the borough reduced to one every four years in a bid to save around £300,000. A third of the borough's councillors are elected at each election to serve four years, resulting in local elections in three years out of four.

But Dudley's Labour administration voted against the idea saying that the authority needed to keep in step with other councils in the Black Country.

Fatal crash driver's bail is extended

A 32-year-old man arrested after a woman was killed when hit by car at a bus stop has had his bail extended.

Former Stourbridge student Rebecca McManus, aged 21, of Harborne Road, Oldbury, died at the scene on Hagley Road West in Bearwood from multiple injuries on May 31.

A motorist was arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving.

He was then released on bail pending further inquiries.

Last week police said his bail had been extended as investigations continue.

Miss McManus had attended King Edward VI College in Stourbridge before enrolling at the University of East Anglia in Norwich for an English literature with creative writing degree course.

She also worked as a publicity assistant at publisher Unthank Books.

Tributes were paid by teachers, friends and fellow students following her death, which was described as an 'irreplaceable loss' by staff at the university.

A second woman, also aged 21, who was with Miss McManus at the time of the crash, was also injured.

Technology

UKIP group leader Councillor Ken Turner had officially tabled the motion at a council meeting saying the changes would make vital savings. He also claimed three councillors per ward were no longer needed as modern technology meant people could contact their councillor more easily.

Conservative group leader Councillor Harley said: "UKIP mirror proposals that we had already put forward. We wanted the leader of the council to commission a report and call a meeting later in the year where we could vote on this and still have sufficient time to bring it in for 2015."

Dudley Council leader Councillor David Sparks said he was not against the principle of a cut in the number of councillors but said all metropolitan councils in the Black Country and Birmingham have the same system.

"If there is going to be change there should be change in all of them," he added.

Country star's home gig



Rising Nashville music star Rachel Button, of Rowley Regis, performs in Oldbury

IT was take me home Black Country roads for a rising star who returned from Nashville for a sell-out gig.

Rachel Button, aged 29, grew up in Oldbury where she first discovered a love of country and folk music through her parents.

Her mother and father, Julia and Jon, were there to see their daughter back on stage for a live show in the town.

Rachel has spent much of the last 12 months dividing her time between London

and travelling more than 4,000 miles to the home of country music in the United States.

She has been recording with award-winning producer David Kalmusky and rubbing shoulders with Sir Cliff Richard and Foo Fighters frontman Dave Grohl.

The former Perryfields High School and Rowley Regis pupil is now dreaming of signing her own record publishing deal.

But before she embarks on the next stage of her career she arrived back in Oldbury to perform at the Buttons' Cafe, on Sunday.

Boss on £232k a year after £50k raise

THE chief executive of West Midlands Ambulance Service has been given a £50,000 pay rise, taking his salary to more than £232,000.

Anthony Marsh's salary is almost £90,000 a year more than the Prime Minister, £142,500. He splits his time between the West Midlands and East of England Ambulance Service, where he is also the chief executive.

NHS

Ambulance service bosses defended the increase today saying it was cheaper than the cost of hiring another chief executive to run one of the organisations full time.

Only a handful of civil servants in Whitehall were paid more than Dr Marsh's salary in the past year, one of whom was Sir David Nicholson, the former chief executive of the entire NHS, who was on £255,000 to £259,999.

Dr Marsh took over the East of England Ambulance Service at the beginning of the year but carried on with his West Midlands job.

Tom Watson, MP for West Bromwich East, said: "This man is probably the highest paid public servant in the West Midlands and nobody has ever heard of him."

Shopfitter is to shed staff

UP to 20 redundancies are expected at a shopfitting and interior display business with an operation in the West Midlands.

Two divisions of Alan Nuttall, which has a base in Dudley, are being amalgamated.

Human resources manager Sue Judge said: "We can confirm that a small number of redundancies are proposed due to the amalgamation of two divisions within the business."

"Applications for voluntary redundancy have been invited before moving to compulsory redundancies."

Red Lion ramble

THE Stourbridge branch of the Ramblers' Association is holding a four-and-a-half walk.

The walk on Sunday will leave The Red Lion pub in Bobbington at 10.30am. New members are welcome.

For information see www.ramblers-stourbridge.org.uk

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Statue of poet in revamp of market

GINGERBREAD at eight old pence per pound, shabby strings and trousers wide enough for two.

The variety of items sold at Dudley Market has changed from 1827, but market life goes on almost 200 years later with a revamp well underway.

But council bosses not wanting to forget the market's past are to include a humorous poem by poet Ben Boucher on a new seat bench.

A bronze seated statue of Mr Boucher will also be cast on one of the two benches in front of the Grade II listed fountain, which is also being refurbished.

Lines from Mr Boucher's Line on Dudley Market poem will be inscribed on the bench, which will be made of the same Portland stone as the fountain.

Dudley Council lodged a planning application for the benches, which will be 13ft long and 4ft high. The work is part of a £6.7 improvement project to the market place. It is expected to be complete by early next year.

Councillor Judy Foster, cabinet member for regeneration, said: "We are using these seats as an opportunity to create something unique to Dudley."

Drink and drugs death

A MAN found on the floor of his home died from a combination of alcohol and drugs, an inquest heard.

Simon Bowen, aged 39, of Kingsway, Wollaston, had a history of depression and drinking, Dudley Coroner's Court was told. A post mortem revealed the metal worker had a combination of morphine, ethanol and diazepam in his system after his body was found at his home on January 22.

Senior Coroner Robin Balmain said, on balance, the cause of death was due to the effects of drugs and alcohol.

New dig at cone

A SECOND excavation has been launched at a famous glass-making site after an earlier dig uncovered the remains of two historic glass cones. Volunteers, including Ambicote History Society, took part in the excavation at Ambicote's Glasshouse Cone earlier this year.

Traders consider loyalty card proposal

BUSINESS leaders in Halesowen want to introduce a loyalty card scheme in an attempt to tackle a slump in customer numbers.

Traders are investigating the proposal as part of a raft of ideas thought up to try and entice more shoppers to the area.

Newly-appointed chairman of the town's chamber of trade, Wayne Edwards, is to present the loyalty card scheme at a business meeting today at Thursfields Solicitors in Hagley Road.

He said: "People are still interested in their local town but we're competing in a difficult market.

"We have rising car parking charges, the internet and the attraction of Merry Hill.

Ideas

"What we are doing is coming up with new ideas to bring people back into the town and make use of our businesses."

Although the plan for the loyalty card is in its early stages, Mr Edwards said shop-

pers would earn points by recommending town businesses to friends and family.. The points could then be used for discounts.

He said: "Town life has been around for a long time, it is a great place to socialise and support the local economy.

"For every pound spent locally, 70p goes into the local economy. While for every pound spent at a major supermarket, only five per cent comes to the local economy."

Mr Edwards runs a company called Less For Office Supplies and has a shop in Hale-

sowen town centre called Less For Ink. He said he had been in discussions with the Black Country Chamber of Trade about the proposal and the move has been welcomed by community leaders.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare said: "I think it is great the businesses are getting together to put something like a loyalty card scheme together.

"The cards are offered everywhere these days, and there is no reason why it can't be used to support local trade."

Blueprint to build homes on rail and canal corridors

DERELICT schools, a closed foundry and former college sites are among the target areas for new homes unveiled by Dudley Council.

Council officers have identified locations for 16,127 homes in the borough by 2026 to help tackle a housing crisis that sees 63,000 new homes needed across the Black Country.

In a development strategy released for public consultation until September 12, locations for the housing have been outlined. If backed by councillors, the document will be used by housing developers and planners.

Officers say 2,322 homes are to be started soon.

Identified

Over the next 12 years, officers have identified space for a further 10,971 homes, including 1,037 in Stourbridge, Halesowen and Dudley town centres.

A total of 1,511 homes has been allocated for Stourbridge and Brierley Hill.

The main focus will be housing on former industrial land along the canal network and close to town centres.

The Longlands Campus of Birmingham Metropolitan College could hold 34 homes. The former Lloyds foundry in Brettell Lane, Brierley Hill, could be turned into an estate for 80 dwellings. The former Stuart Crystal Works, off High Street in Wordsley, could provide space for 72 homes.

In an area covering Dud-

ley town centre to Brierley Hill, officers believe 1,358 homes can be built. This includes the site of Dudley Guest Hospital, where there is room for 172 properties. Development proposals are already being put together.

Recently vacated Dudley Council office buildings at Cloughton House, off Blowers Green Road, could provide space for 36 homes and the Steel Stockholders site in Pensnett Road could be turned into an estate for 135 homes.

Meanwhile, a total of 1,407 homes could be built in an area called the Jewellery Line, a corridor of land following the railway line between Birmingham and Worcester, which includes Lye.

A total of 24 homes have been earmarked for the former Holt Farm Primary School, 140 at Caledonia Sewage Works and 10 for Springfield Works in Pearson Street, Lye.

Driver is taken to hospital

A MOTORIST was taken to hospital after a two-car smash on Saturday.

Fire crews from Stourbridge and Oldbury were called to the crash in Windmill Hill, Halesowen, at around 4pm. The woman driver of a Landrover was taken to Russells Hall Hospital to be treated for back pain. Watch commander Brian Morris said: "We had to take the roof off a Landrover which had gone into the back of a Ford Fiesta."



Five-month-old Harrison Jordan at home with mother Melanie and father Tim

Family's joy over their 'little fighter'

THEY call him their little fighter — an apt name for a tiny boy who has defied the odds.

Born on February 3, 11 weeks early, and weighing just one-and-a-half pounds, Harrison Jordan's life was touch and go during his early days. In the first months of Harrison's life, he called Russells Hall, New Cross and Birmingham Children's Hospitals home.

Twice his parents Melanie and Tim said their goodbyes and had him blessed by the hospital chaplain as they feared the worst.

Now the youngster, as small as a £10 note when born, is back at home in Kingswinford and getting stronger, last week weighing in at 7 lbs five oz.

Surrounded by family and friends, Harrison has been christened. "It was amazing, and very emotional," said Melanie, 40. "It felt like we would never get to that point with Harrison. We always had hope but he was such a poorly little boy. So it was a really happy day."

The ceremony was held at The Church of the Ascension in Wall Heath, with a celebration at the Kingfisher Hotel where Melanie and Tim married six years ago.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MP backs firms who help young

A SCHEME recognising firms which support young people has been welcomed by Dudley South MP Chris Kelly.

He is backing the Youth Friendly Badge initiative. The aim of the badge is to recognise those UK employers who engage with young people.

Mr Kelly said: "I welcome this initiative to help young people. Although youth unemployment has started to decrease, I support any scheme that will help to build a sustainable future for people in Dudley and the Black Country."

Youth band are in concert at fun day

A YOUTH band which wowed the crowds during celebrations of Black Country Day are tuning up for their next performance.

The Coseley Comets will entertain residents at East Coseley Fun Day on August at Clayton Park, in Old Meeting Road, between 1pm and 5pm.

There will be stalls, community groups and services.

Anyone interested in joining should visit www.thecometsymb.co.uk or call 07720 757074

Brazil date for skillful student

A BLACK Country UTC student is flying the flag for vocational education in the West Midlands after being confirmed as a UK Squad member for next year's WorldSkills competition in Brazil.

Engineering student Hayley Ramadanah is one of 98 young people to land a spot in the prestigious squad, offering the chance to compete at WorldSkills in Sao Paulo next year.

Terrific Tuesdays at the Oak House

A POPULAR museum will be offering a range of activity days to keep youngsters entertained during the summer holidays.

The Oak House Museum in Oak Road, West Bromwich, is set to launch Terrific Tuesdays at noon on July 29. It will start off with a look at the perils of doing chores in Tudor Britain. Call 0121 553 0759.

Barrister chosen

BARRISTER Ayoub Khan has been chosen by the Liberal Democrats to contest the by-election to succeed West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner Bob Jones, who died suddenly this month.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



IN theory, six penalty points for using a mobile phone while driving, as proposed by Whitehall last week, will be a huge deterrent. In real life, what sort of deterrent will it take to make the woman I saw the other day think twice? She was texting while driving – in a convertible with the hood down. Bold as brass which, strangely enough, was the colour of her hair.

WASN'T it pitiful, hearing the independence tendency on Any Questions (Radio 4) trying to convince Scots that if they voted to leave the UK, Whitehall would carry on awarding Royal Navy contracts to shipyards in Scotland, which would then be a foreign country? Can you really see any English politician campaigning under the banner "British jobs for Scottish workers"?

I HATE to be a party-pooper amid all the champagne corks popping and tears of joy over the vote to appoint women bishops. But, seriously, does anyone believe that men would have surrendered the Church of England to women so feebly if it were worth holding on to? Throughout history men have loved power. That is why the institutions that really matter and have real power, Parliament, the law, the armed forces, the City and most professions, are still firmly in male control. The Church has been handed over to women because in a Godless age it is dying on its feet, utterly irrelevant and has about as much power and influence on society as Jackanory. The ordaining of women bishops is the last dying gasp of a clapped-out organisation that has only a few years left. They know it. We know it.

BUT has anyone told the Devil? The General Synod has adopted a new form of baptism which makes no mention of him. This is frankly ungrateful. For centuries, the Devil was the Church's biggest fundraiser. Generations of our ancestors, frightened out of their skins, handed a tenth of their income over to the Church to save them from the Devil and his fiery domain. Now that the Church is admitting in effect that he never existed, can we have our money back? That's a few million groats and sovereigns, plus compound interest for, say, 1,000 years. A million quid for every citizen should just about cover it.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Pub and chip shop to boost museum funds

CHIPS and beer are at the forefront of the Black Country Living Museum's plans to increase revenue to fund investment.

Around 240,000 people visited the Black Country Living Museum during 2013, continuing a downward trend since 2009. This led to the heritage museum at Tipton Road making a loss of around £15,000.

But museum bosses say they are optimistic as this was much better than losses of £300,000 the previous year. They have set a target of 254,000 visitors in 2014 to break-even and aim to earn more income through the museum's famous fish and chips and its pub, The Bottle and Glass.

Museum director and chief executive Andrew Lovett said problems with high running costs at the attraction had been 'fixed' and he was confident visitor numbers would rise.

It comes after the museum, near Castle Hill, heard earlier this month that it will receive a £2,658,000 grant from Arts Council England.

Mr Lovett said: "Although we need and gets lots of support with large developments at the museum and to allow us to do special projects, we rely on our own efforts to attract paying visitors to meet our everyday costs – amounting to about £4 million each year. To do

By Andrew Turton

this in 2014 we need to welcome a little over 250,000 visitors. It's what many businesses would call their break-even point."

The museum revealed it made a loss of £15,491 but this was an 'enormously positive improvement' on the year before.

"Our costs were too high," said Mr Lovett. "And although we have fixed that issue, we want to attract an ever-increasing number of visitors and to earn more income from things like our fish and chip shop, baker's, pub and our gift shop, so that we can invest in the site and continue to provide a really special visit."

The museum was helped by Government axing proposed changes to the curriculum that could have resulted in a fall in school bookings. There are proposals for a schools' reception centre at the museum.

Milestone for much-loved Elfie



Elfie Bridgwater with her family at Holloway Court

A great-great-grandmother celebrated her 100th birthday with all four generations of her family.

Elfie Bridgwater enjoyed her party at Holloway Court in Colley Gate, Halesowen.

Mrs Bridgwater was born in Stoke Prior, near Bromsgrove. She had two sisters and one brother.

After school she worked at the Rover factory in Longbridge, where she met her husband George.

The pair married in Stoke Prior in 1930 before moving to Belbroughton. He worked for a haulage company. Mrs Bridgwater was in the Women's Land Army during the Second World War.

They had one daughter, Masie, who died aged 59 in 1990. She also had four grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and 14 great-great-grandchildren.

After her husband died in 1973, she moved to Kates Hill before moving to Holloway Court 13 years ago.

Granddaughter Angela Hackett, aged 63, said: "We all love her and are so proud of her. She is very strong willed and used to have a drop of whisky every night."

Concern on future for green wedge site

CONCERNS have been raised over a developer eyeing up a beauty stop for its next housing project.

A councillor in Halesowen says she has been told that St Modwen is preparing a scheme for 80 homes at the Coombeswood Green Wedge.

The developer has already built a replacement cricket clubhouse on the 100-acre site to make way for homes at the former home of Coombes Wood Cricket Club.

Options

The firm's regional manager, John Dodds, said the firm was 'considering our options' for the Halesowen area but the company would not confirm housing plans were being drawn up.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare backed residents who fought plans for homes by Barratt West Midlands on the green site.

She said: "We've done it once, we'll battle hard again. No-one here wants homes to be built on the wedge, it is a green belt of land which means a lot to people."

"The last thing we want is some housing up there to spoil it for everyone, it's bad enough the cricket club plan was passed."

Councillor Shakespeare said she was told about the plans for the homes from St Modwen by a contact.



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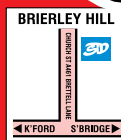
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£1m plan to boost Brierley Hill buses

A £1.2 MILLION scheme to improve bus services and roads in Brierley Hill has started.

As part of the project a crossing will be created on the A4036 Pedmore Road.

Bus priority measures will be introduced along The Boulevard, the main connecting road between Merry Hill Shopping Centre and Brierley Hill High Street, in a bid to improve bus services.

Centro

Work is being carried out by Dudley Council on behalf of Centro, the region's transport authority.

It is being funded by a multi-million pound grant from the Government's Better Bus Area Fund.

Centro received £5m, the maximum amount, and this has been supplemented by £5m from other sources.

Councillor John McNicholas, chairman of Centro, said: "The money we have received from the fund will result in many newer, more modern buses coming into operation in the Brierley Hill area.

"The highway improvements we are making will help ensure better journey times, and increased reliability."

Council transport boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said the move would be a boost for the local economy.

Major new funding boost for canal Portal project

PLANS for a canalside visitor attraction in Dudley have been given a further £100,000 boost.

Dudley Canal Trust is celebrating after receiving the latest grant from The Garfield Weston Foundation. The money will go towards financing a new visitor and heritage centre.

Construction of the building is set to start before the end of the year and the Todd's End site, off Birmingham New Road, will house a new education and visitors centre called The Portal.

This will provide facilities for schools, community groups and the public to discover the Black Country's canal heritage.

Bosses say total cost of the redevelopment project is expected to be £3 million and it is hoped that the building will be open next Easter.

Mike Duley, Chair of the Project Steering Group for the Portal Project, said the latest grant will make a vital difference to the project.

"This latest contribution to our project, from the Garfield Weston Foundation, is a vital addition to our fundraising," he said. "The Portal would simply not be possible without our generous funders."

The Portal will enhance the connection between Dudley Canal and Lime-stone Mines and the Castle

By Katy-Rose Meaney

Hill Development Project, including the Black County Living Museum, giving visitors opportunities to explore both sites.

Dudley Canal Trust was established in 1970 to protect and preserve the network of underground canal tunnels beneath Dudley and the £3m project will also see a new swing bridge linking the canalside attraction to the Black Country Living Museum.

Previous funding to improve the visitor facilities has been provided by The Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Lottery gave the project a £989,200 grant and a £1m cash windfall came from the European Regional Development Fund earlier this year. It comes as a major £10.1m regeneration scheme is under way at Castle Hill to improve links between the canal tunnels, museum and Dudley Zoo.

£3k raised to help raid-hit day centre



Manager Gill Williams with clients Sandra Santon, Connie Cox, Rita Salisbury and Raye Hickerman at Age Concern, Halesowen

A PENSIONERS' day centre has battled back after being targeted by burglars and vandals by celebrating a fundraising drive.

Staff at the Age Concern Day Centre, in Halesowen, say they have been overwhelmed by the support of campaigners following raids.

The branch of Stourbridge and Halesowen Age Concern managed to raise around £3,000 from a fundraising event last month.

It comes just nine months after the

centre, in Green Lane, was targeted twice in a week by thieves. Around £9,000 of damage was caused at the centre.

Centre chairman and ward councillor Ken Turner said Age Concern members had been touched by the volume of support. "We are so pleased and it is great to see the community coming together to help us," he said.

"It has been a difficult few months but we have got through it."

The centre is now back in full oper-

ation with tightened security now in place.

Businessman Tony Billingham, who owns three care homes in the Halesowen area, offered £250 to the centre. Rotary Club members from Halesowen and Rowley Regis also agreed to donate £500.

Locksmith Mike O'Sullivan offered his services for free to install stronger bolts on doors to keep intruders out.

Mr Turner added: "We are looking forward with optimism."

Tidy sum funds college sessions

A COLLEGE in Halesowen is the first further education site in the country to be given funding for a new SUMS Centre for maths and statistics support.

Students working towards Higher National and Foundation Degree qualifications at Halesowen College will be able to attend specialist maths drop-in sessions at the new centre. The site will offer drop-in sessions for maths and statistics support from September.

The college has been given £15,000 funded by Sigma, the national network for cross-university mathematics and statistics support in England. Students working on courses run with the University of Worcester and Newman University will also be able to attend.

Sudden surge in emergency calls

MORE people than ever are phoning 999 in the West Midlands - leading to bosses implementing an action plan to cope.

Training was cancelled and staff holidays restricted as ambulance staff moved to cope with a 'massive increase' in demand.

Successive weekends in June saw rises of 12, 13 and 15 per cent in calls, compared to a year earlier.

Chiefs said the demand was only comparable with weekends when there had been heavy snow.

Bosses say there is no particular reason for the increase.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews

IT seems rather sad that in the same month that we have celebrated all that is best about the Black Country, we also mourn the passing of one of the area's best loved sons.

Tommy Mundon was a true Black Country legend. One of the funniest men this area has ever known, he could turn the must humdrum of situations into one of his side-splitting monologues.

And while the likes of Bernard Manning went out of their way to shock audiences with their vulgarity, 'aer Tum' managed to make people laugh without ever uttering so much as a swear-word.

Despite the plethora of Liverpudlian, Mancunian and cockney comedians on our screens, television producers reckoned his humour would not travel outside of the Black Country, and this tells us all we need to know about the prejudices which outsiders continue to hold against this area.

That Tommy Mundon never managed to make it onto a national stage was a great injustice to a great man. But an even bigger injustice to those who were denied the opportunity to see him at work.

□□□

And while we're on the subject, here are a few words from the great man:

"I've just landed a new job working in a ladies' sauna. I have to go in every now and again and top up the water while all the ladies are in their naked, and then afterwards I have to give them a massage."

"And would you believe it, £350 a week! Still, I think I can afford it."

□□□

SOME infant school headteachers have been complaining about how they are being forced to cut their teaching budgets because of a new Government ruling that all pupils, regardless of their parents' income, should be provided with free school meals up to the age of seven.

For a brief moment, I was almost sympathetic. Surely, schools are supposed to be places of learning, not free restaurants for middle-class kids?

And then one of these headmasters came out and explained what outbacks were having to be made.

Staff numbers? Textbooks? "We've had to cancel an order for some tablets we were supposed to be getting," he said.

Now, making the bold assumption that he is not referring to the first aid kit, this headmaster is bemoaning the fact he will not be able to blow his school budget on iPad-type mini-computers.

Here's a revolutionary idea, Sir. Forget spending thousands of pounds on hi-tech toys, and instead focus on teaching them to read and write properly.



Tommy Mundon, Dolly Allen and Harry Harrison



Ken Dodd at Dudley Town Hall with Tommy in 2004



Tommy with his first ever DVD at his home in 2008

Farewell Tommy, king of the loffs

MARK ANDREWS takes an affectionate look back at the life of Black Country entertainer Tommy Mundon

THE irony was not lost on Tommy Mundon when he was forced to retire after being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

"I'm now a stand-up comedian who can't stand up for long," he said.

Now, after a five-year battle with this most cruel of illnesses, the king of Black Country comedy has died, four months after celebrating his 80th birthday.

His act was a throwback to another age, littered with colourful anecdotes about close-knit communities and pigs in the back yard. He evoked images of the simple joys of life, of happiness in times of adversity.

Ken Dodd, a close friend of Tommy's for more than 20 years, paid tribute to the man who spent more than half a century making the Black Country laugh.

Dodd, who last saw Tommy last year, spoke of his sadness at the passing of the Black Country comedy legend.

"I am extremely saddened to hear the news," he said. "He was a wonderful friend and a wonderful comedian."

"And he was more than a comedian, he was a humorist, he knew all the Black Country stories."

"I admired him hugely. I had known Tommy for a long time and he became a very good friend, and he was a great personality."

Friend Alan Smith, known under his stage name Aynuk, had appeared with him on stage numerous times over the past 50 years. The 76-year-old from Netherton, Dudley, recalled Tommy's pride in the Black Country. "Tommy was a proper Black Countryman," he said.



A youthful-looking Tommy seen in his on-stage outfit here in April, 1977

"He was a familiar face. He could not go anywhere without being recognised. He was an ambassador for the Black Country."

A lifelong resident of Halesowen – he was a pupil of the County Modern Boys' School, now Windsor High School – Tommy was a born showman. "I've always been the clown – right from school," he said. He recalled putting on his first show at the age of four or five when he was growing up in the town's Chapel Street.

"I lived in a terraced house, with a double entry which went from front to back. I put up a curtain at the back which I would use as my backdrop. That was my first performance."

At school, his teachers discovered he had a knack for keeping classes amused with stories he had made up.

But it was his fundraising efforts for Hasbury Methodist church which gave him his first real taste of the limelight. "I don't know what it was, but I had this talent for making people laugh," he said. "A chap called Alan Bissell persuaded me to have a go on my own, and

he wrote me a sketch, and before you knew it I was doing clubs and Rotary dinners." One thing he could not do was stick to his script.

"Right from the start I was ad-libbing a lot," he said. "I was probably 14 or 15 on my first show. It went very well though. In those days, folks would laugh at anything."

In the early 1970s he joined the Black Country Night Out show, performing with popular Black Country comics Dolly Allen and Doug Parker, poet Harry Harrison and folk singer Jon Raven.

But at this time he was better known as part of the MWM light entertainment troupe, which saw team up with Opportunity Knocks winners Tony and Keith West, and singer Linda Marsh.

Canada

By the late 70s his act was going global, with several of his tapes being sold to Black Country expats living abroad. In 1979 the Black Country Night Out show went on tour in Canada, but Tommy was not part of it due to his job as a lorry driver for Dudley Council.

"I was the only one who had a day job," he recalled. "They told me I could take a month's holiday from work, but I wouldn't get paid."

The highlight of his career came when he performed in front of a packed Symphony Hall in Birmingham a few years ago. "It holds around 2,000 people, and I remember walking out onto the stage."

"If you can get a few laughs at the beginning, it builds your confidence, and when 2,000 people started laughing it was wonderful."

Tommy continued to be in huge demand right up until the moment he was forced to end his showbusiness career in 2012.

His act was rooted in a rose-tinted image of a Black Country which never existed, and the audiences couldn't get enough of it. With his passing, another link to the Black Country of old, is lost forever. We shall not see his like again.

WEEK IN POLITICS

with Daniel Wainwright

GEORGE Osborne's announcement that the £353 million 'super' hospital for the Black Country can finally go ahead is a big one.

The much-maligned Private Finance Initiative has been in for an overhaul. Now here comes the hospital courtesy of PF2 – a private finance scheme that's a little less, well, private.

The old system gave us schools, hospitals and more but came with a pretty hefty mortgage in terms of long-term, regular payments from the public purse. The new arrangement is meant to be smaller and simpler. But while it's all been drawn up, the long wait for the super hospital in Smethwick went on. And on. And it's not over.

It's still subject to a business case being approved and there won't even be spades in the ground before 2016. What it does give the Chancellor, and the Tory party for that matter, is something to talk about in the run-up to the General Election.

The announcement was made at Rowley Regis Hospital, which we are told is going to play a greater role once the new acute hospital a few miles away is up and running. It could have been made at Sandwell General or City Hospitals instead, I suppose.

But then they're in safe Labour seats whereas Rowley Regis is in a key marginal battleground that the Tories have to hold on to. I'm sure that's not the reason for doing it there, though.

Talking of George Osborne, here's a little insight into what goes on in the run-up to getting an interview.

These days, whenever any prominent politician from any party comes to town, the spin doctors like to gather reporters in a little room. At some point during the visit the politician is brought in to see the waiting media who are allowed to ask one, or maybe two, questions each.

Before they arrive, a spin doctor asks the reporters if they can 'maybe, agree on who is going to ask what so there's no doubling up'. They then ask to know exactly what questions we are going to give the politician so they can go and prepare them.

Part of me thinks it's good that if you're asking about a very local matter it's helpful if the politician knows the background to give an informed response. But the other part of me thinks it's a damned liberty.

Most Most high-ranking politicians, past and present, are fairly adept at dealing with the curve ball question. I'm sure Mr Osborne would have coped.

Michael Gove, long before his unceremonious dumping as Education Secretary, had not been briefed for a question in Wolverhampton about the alleged rift between the Tories and Lib Dems over free school meals. And yet he answered quickly, confidently and professionally. His spin doctors were furious.

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The 'lies' we are told on population

WHAT gets me, how we are lied to about immigration and the population of this country. Last year we were told 62.4 million was the population of this country. Now the other week it's over 64m. So, we have let two million enter, in a year?

How can we cope with the NHS and the housing situation alone? And they have the cheek to say we old 'uns are causing the trouble in the NHS. We are the ones who have worked all our lives from the age of 14 and paid in over 50 years or even more, plus serving in the Armed Forces. The NHS

Dogs are not only pets at risk

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Should your rabbit become listless, or start breathing hard through an open mouth or go limp, get him to a vet immediately.

Rabbits must be checked daily throughout summer months for signs of flystrike.

Smaller animals, like hamsters, rats and gerbils, can be kept cool by opening windows and closing curtains, using a fan (but not pointing it directly at them), refreshing water and providing a frozen water bottle, wrapped in a towel so that it cannot be chewed.

KATE FOWLER
Animal Aid

would be in a sorry state today if our generation thought sod it! My first job on coming out of the Army in 1949 was driving a lorry, wages £5 a week for five and a half days. Never mind today's £7.50 an hour.

Still I suppose our generation had a different outlook on life. Sitting on your backside was out really, because not many had a TV. We lived in rooms for three years to save for a deposit for a house and no washing machine either – hardships tell me.

F H JENNINGS
Birmingham

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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Chocolate bars and computers don't mix

PETER Rhodes reports 'Cabinet Minister Francis Maude says older people must get digitally engaged and start using the internet, or risk losing access to governmentservices, everything that can be delivered online should be and only online'.

He then reveals that a savvy city worker was duped out of £500 when using the computer when using it to purchase a computer, the money promptly vanished in a criminal gang's account. He suggests 'digitally engaged' actually means 'robbed'.

He has enlightened me of the brazen intention to soon implement this shameful attack on the senile citizens, yes I did mean senile, as some think of us.

A heinous and barbaric crime

WITH regard to the recent strangling of a dog near a school in Kates Hill; any cruelty to an animal is bad enough but this was both heinous and barbaric and I absolutely shudder to think of what the poor creature must have gone through.

Judging from The Chronicle's description it could well be two (or even more) thugs involved and that they sadistically enjoyed what they were doing.

Ian Austin MP has offered a reward to help in the capture of those responsible.

Chris Kelly MP has written to the justice secretary asking for the maximum penalty under the law should the police apprehend the culprits.

Would the maximum penalty be applied? Seeing is believing.

S HUNT
Dudley

Bostin' Black Country event

WHAT a fantastic day and what a joy to see Dudley's Stone Street Square in action after 15 long years of doing nothing!

I am on about the Black Country Weekend — well done all of you.

I know the event took a lot of organisation but, believe me, everyone will be talking about it for a long time.

It really was a 'Bostin Day'.

Roll on next year's event.

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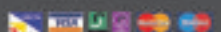
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BHP070201

Society trio celebrate four decades of service



Jackie Quinton, Sue Greenaway and Meg Pottinger have each clocked up 40 years at Dudley Building Society

A LOT has changed since Jackie Quinton, Meg Pottinger and Sue Greenaway started at Dudley Building Society but speaking to customers is still one of their favourite parts of their job.

Over the next few weeks the trio of workers, all aged 56, will each reach four decades of service working behind the counters at various branches since all three of the ladies applied for the same job as an office junior at the society back in 1974.

Meg and Jackie were at school together at Rowley Regis Grammar and Sue attended nearby at Dudley Girls High.

Meg, of Gornal, said: "When we first started things were very different, everything was written down. Now all we have to do is put it into the computer and press a button, however, I still find myself using the old system from time to time."

"I love the daily contact with our customers, getting to know them and making sure we meet their expectations."

"When people come in they will

often wait for me and Jackie. Quite often we have looked after their accounts for a lot of their life and they have brought members of the family to the branch too."

Friend and colleague Jackie, of Cradley Heath, added: "Time has really flown by it only feels like yesterday that we started."

Sue, who works at the Brierley Hill branch, said she recalled the days when calculations were done manually.

The whole society will be wearing something ruby as a tribute to their colleagues who have given such lengthy service.

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Amazing Caitlyn has never missed a day



Caitlyn Detheridge, aged seven, who has had 100 per cent attendance at Moat Farm Infant School in Oldbury SHE would be an employer's dream – if she were not seven-years-old.

That is because young Caitlyn Detheridge has not had a day off school in the four years since she started.

From the age of three Caitlyn has attended Moat Farm Infant School in Oldbury, and has never had a day off sick.

Before she finally finished at the school last week she was presented with prizes including a Nintendo DS for being such a good role model.

Sneak preview of park

PEOPLE can be among the first to view Hagley Hall's historic park since its restoration while also raising money for the homeless. St Basil's charity preview day is September 14. The 350-acre estate is not regularly open until 2015. Call 0121 772 9614 or visit www.stbasils.org.uk/hagleyhall

Housing charity is flooded with calls

THE number of calls taken by homeless charity Shelter from people struggling to pay for their homes in the West Midlands has soared by just over 97 per cent in the last two years.

In the year to the end of March year it had calls from 679 people in the region struggling to pay their rent or mortgage, or going into debt because of their housing costs which officials say is a massive jump compared to 345 in 2011/2012.

The total number of callers to Shelter's helpline from the West Midlands, which also includes concerns from people who are homeless, was 13,517 compared with 10,917 in 2012-2013 – an increase of 23.8 per cent.

Charity bosses say the figures reflect the growing number of people in the region facing an ongoing battle to keep up with their housing costs and the organisation is warning that, with so many already living on a financial knife-edge, a job loss or serious illness can be all it takes to tip someone into a spiral that ends in homelessness.

Over the last year, the helpline's advisers heard

from 124,000 people across the country in need of support. But nearly 54,000 calls went unanswered as the charity struggled to keep up with demand.

Despite increasing the number of helpline advisors, the charity is finding that overwhelming need for their services continues to outstrip resource, making it impossible to answer every call.

Shelter helpline adviser Nadeem Khan said: "It's heart breaking to hear from families everyday who are desperate to keep a roof over their heads but it's even worse to know that at any given time there could be others waiting desperately on the line who we just can't get to."

By John Corser

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The 1/7th Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment gather at Halesowen Station



A patriotic procession by horse and cart is held in Dudley



Civic reception at St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton, for departing troops

Repercussions of war felt across the region

RAILWAY stations across the nation were bustling with activity.

Thousands of part-time soldiers departing for their annual camp jostled with day-trippers making the most of the Bank Holiday weekend.

Life continued as normal in towns and villages around Staffordshire and the Black Country. On Saturday, August 1, 1914, throngs of people lined the streets in many towns to cheer the Territorials on their way, some units travelling by train while others were marching to camp.

There was a particularly large turnout in Wolverhampton where the men of the Royal Army Medical Corps were setting off on an 85-mile march to St Asaph in North Wales.

The soldiers left their Drill Hall in Stafford Street just after 4pm. Also in the parade were Ambulance wagons, members of the Army Cyclist Corps and others. They rested in Tong in Shropshire, 10 miles away, that evening. Next night they had reached

MEMORY LANE

By Marion Brennan

Bletchley, near Market Drayton. But they would go no further. In the early hours, orders arrived to turn around and return to base.

The following day, Tuesday, August 4, at precisely 11pm, came the news that Britain was at war with Germany.

Already in St Asaph were around 920 men of the Walsall Territorials who had been given a hearty send-off on Sunday morning from the Drill Hall in Whitmore Street.

Also in Wales were 1,000 men of the 6th South Staffords, who had arrived that afternoon. Within 12 hours they were packing their kit bags and tents to return. The order had reached the camp at 2am. They arrived at Wolverhampton High Level station at 9.30am on Monday.

The Worcestershire Regiments, whose strongest corps was the 7th Battalion which included 240 men from

Dudley and 130 from Oldbury, were at camp in Minehead, Somerset when they were recalled.

With war looking ever likely, the Government had held talks with the main railway companies and arrangements put in place for a takeover by the State in the case of emergency. Many trains due to have been used for Bank Holiday Monday excursions had been commandeered for troops.

Call-up papers began to arrive at police stations across the region for officers who were Army and Naval reservists. The Territorials, so recently recalled from camp, were at their Drill Halls on Tuesday for medical inspections and exercises.

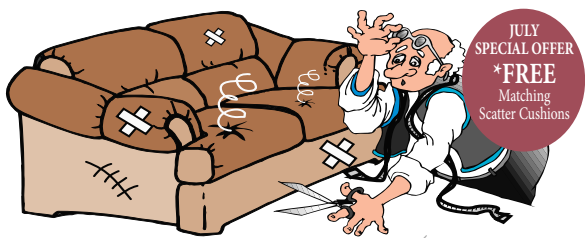
Recruitment posters and newspaper advertisements began to appear calling on men with specific trades to enlist and large crowds of young men besieged the recruiting office in Broad Street, Wolverhampton.

Britain was at war and from Bridgnorth to Brownhills, Stafford to Smethwick, the repercussions were already being felt.



The Walsall Territorials line-up in uniform at The Bridge in the town centre

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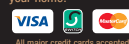


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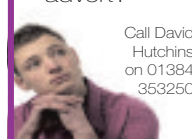
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Charity gave Hannah an opportunity to impress



Hannah Wardle, age 21, was such a vital volunteer that she's got a paid job with We Love Carers in Brierley Hill

WHEN Hannah Wardle started volunteering at a charity in Brierley Hill to gain more work experience she never realised it would have such a big impact on her or the organisation.

But the 21-year-old has gone on to gain a paid apprenticeship and put her own stamp on the charity. Last year Hannah began volunteering for charity the Insight Group, which has since been rebranded as We Love Carers.

For a year she attended the carers and young people's support charity several times a week alongside her studies at Stourbridge College, taking part in everything from cleaning to helping out at a play scheme.

Hannah now works at the Pearson Street café and attends college to gain an NVQ in customer services. She said: "I wanted to help Insight as a volunteer because I'd heard really good things about it. It was daunting at first but over time I made friends and became more confident."

"I couldn't believe it when I was offered the apprenticeship position. It's my first paid job and it feels really good to know that they want and trust me."

Lorraine Stockton, project manager at We Love Carers, said: "Hannah is fantastic. She's given us 100 per cent commitment and is utterly reliable. We've actually changed the way we run our coffee shop because of her suggestions."

Dudley Council for Voluntary Service (DCVS) and Dudley Council are looking for 100 organisations to pledge volunteering opportunities for young people. See volunteeringcounts.org.uk/youth-pledge-100-campaign/

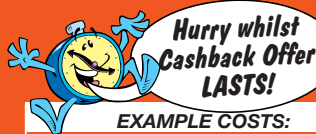
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WILLENHALL'S Ann Skitt retrieves her bike from the garage, deftly fixes a slipped chain, and is ready "to go anywhere."

A young-at-heart 75-year-old, she oozes charisma and charm, still goes to the gym "when she needs to shed a few pounds" and is the life and soul of the party at her local Young At Heart Club where she is a volunteer worker.

It's hard to imagine that his retired assembly worker could ever be knocked back. But failing teeth "became an embarrassment,"

she recalls. Recently she was fitted with implant-retained dentures, inspired by a newspaper article on Steven Burchell's work at the Denture Clinic.

She says: "You don't realise how having bad teeth can affect you until you have treatment like this and you get the confidence back. The whole shape of my mouth has changed. I could not have wished for better treatment. My care was first class and Steven has become like family to us."

A CUTTING-EDGE development to help resolve the stability problems faced by thousands of denture wearers is being offered by the Denture Clinic.

Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) GDC108353, who heads the teams at his North Street practice in Dudley, and other clinics across the region, says the invention has the potential to resolve all-too-common denture stability issues.

Prosthetics are held in place by tiny valve-operated suction devices which are built into the prescription. A clever diaphragm principle, triggered by bite pressure on patients' gums, creates a 'sucking' vacuum between the soft-tissue mouth lining and the prosthetic.

Steven, whose clinics attracts patients from as far as Spain, the Isle of Skye and the Isle of Anglesey, adds: "The denture revolution is evolving at a frightening pace."

"In recent times we have seen, what I can describe only as strident steps forward, with implant-retained over-dentures, 'teeth-in-a-day' implant procedures and suction solution dentures, all coming into main-stream dentistry."

"We also have clever injection moulding technology which allows excellent fitting outcomes and our clinical solutions have never been so appealing."

"Implant dentistry as a resolve for stabilisation issues



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is not suitable for everyone, neither is it all patients' first preference, but the Ultra Suction prosthetics offer yet another possibility.

"The beauty of this affordable technology is that it can deliver for the right patient excellent denture retainers

qualities without the invasive clinical procedures required for implant work. We have always endeavoured to be on the very cusp of clinical development and this is another 'tool' in our commitment to ever-try to deliver results which are greater than patient expectations."

"Lower dentures can often be troublesome as stability is compromised by shrinking gums and bone erosion - it's all part of the ageing process. Ill-fitting dentures create painful friction problems on gums and not least, be a source of compromised chewing and embarrassment."

Reduction

Steven adds: "The device can be mounted on upper or lower teeth and because of its efficiency allows us to consider a reduction in the size of the acrylic 'plate' which can result in improved speech and taste."

Typically, Denture Clinic patients will be assigned more than three-and-a-half clinical hours surgery time in achieving the best possible outcome.

Dentures have traditionally never been associated with cosmetic makeovers, "but our high-quality prosthetics have quite literally taken years off some of our patients," says Steven. "Can dentures look glamorous? Emphatically, yes - we have taken years off the appearance of some of our patients."

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Paul's movie palace shed up for TV award



Ready for the movie to start in Paul Slim's amazing Reelwood Shed in Stourbridge, which is up for an Amazing Spaces 'Oscar'

FOR many, a shed is just somewhere to store tools.

For Paul Slim in Stourbridge, however, his shed means national acclaim, a TV show and possibly a £1,000 cash prize.

His shed is to be featured in Amazing Spaces: Shed of the Year — a three-part Channel 4 programme presented by George Clarke which starts tonight. Film buff Mr Slim, aged 37, kitted out his shed with a home cinema, complete with a huge screen and surround sound.

Called Reelwood, the shed is nom-

inated in the 'unique shed' category and also contains a movie collection and memorabilia.

The project took around three months and £15,000 to complete. It's fitted with four sofas and a 119-inch screen, a 3D projector and 11.2 surround sound. Mr Slim, who used to run the Movie Junction store in Stourbridge, did a lot of the work himself.

The shed can hold 20 people and has a lobby where Mr Slim stores his collection of 3,000 DVDs and Blu-Rays.

The winner will receive a plaque, £100 worth of sponsor Cuprinol products and a crown for their shed.



Paul Slim with George Clarke

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Arcade being returned to look of 1920s glory days

WORK has begun on a major £200,000 restoration of a town centre shopping mall to recapture its 1920s heyday.

Dudley's Fountain Arcade is the latest building to be restored to its former glory under a wider masterplan for the town.

Hidden architectural details have been uncovered already by the works on the arcade, which is locally listed.

The Fountain Arcade, which stretches from Tower Street to the market place, dates back to 1925. Many of its original art deco features will be restored.

Restoration plans have been made possible through Dudley Council's Townscape Heritage Initiative which has already revamped other prominent buildings in the town. Cash has come through the Heritage Lottery Fund, Dudley Council, English Heritage and the Housing and Communities Agency.

Repairs to windows and stonework are already under way as part of the project. Lost features such as blocked-up windows will be reopened and stone detailing to the pediment on the gable reinstated and installing new shop fronts is also planned.

In recent days workers have uncovered some 1920s architectural features which they are now repairing and revealing. These include previously covered-up leaded fanlights and elegant cream-coloured tiles, which were found under the rendering.

Trader Alan Caswell, who owns the Arcade Toy Shop, said: "The end result will look superb. It is making Dudley look really nice and traditional and makes it look different to other towns and Merry Hill."



An artist's impression of how the restored Fountain Arcade in Dudley town centre will look

By-election will cost taxpayers £3.7m

TAXPAYERS will foot a £3.7 million bill for holding a by-election to replace West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner Bob Jones.

The election on August 21 was called following the sudden death of commissioner Mr Jones at the age of 59.

The cost has been condemned by shadow policing minister Jack Dromey, who said the money could be used to put 158 police officers on the beat.

Police and crime commissioners were created in 2012 to replace police authorities, which were made up of councillors and lay members.

Mr Jones, who represented Labour, was elected with a turnout of just 12 per cent. Across the country the average turnout was 15 per cent and there are concerns over a worse turnout for a by-election in the summer holiday season.

Legislation has been criticised after it emerged that authorities must hold a by-election within 35 working days of it being called by two members of the public. Mr Dromey said the election was called by two people 'associated with UKIP' within three days of Mr Jones' death.

MPs back arrests over 'copycat' web scams

MPS in the Black Country have welcomed five arrests over copycat Government websites after both raising the issue in Westminster.

The arrests came after websites were mocked up to seem like official Government versions, leaving those who tried to order official documents such as passports and car tax disks out of pocket.

The investigation from the National Trading Standards Board has been welcomed by both West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson, and Warley MP John Spellar after they called for something to be done.

Campaigned

Mr Watson campaigned against the misleading websites in Parliament and called for tougher action against those responsible.

He said: "I welcome these arrests. Just last month I wrote to Francis Maude at the Cabinet Office to highlight how thousands of unsuspecting consumers are being ripped off by these scammers."

"Many of these websites replicate the Government's own DirectGov colour scheme and branding, making it difficult to tell the difference. Sometimes people don't even realise they have been misled until they read their bank statement."

Mr Spellar also met with the Minister responsible. He added: "I am really pleased they are cracking down on these low lives who are finding new ways to thrive hard earned money from ordinary people."

More than half scrap dealers get warning

SEVEN out of 13 scrap metal sites visited in Sandwell during a joint council and police crackdown were found to be operating illegally.

Officers visited businesses to check if they were licensed following a shake-up of the law in October.

Disappointing

Bosses from Sandwell Council said it was 'disappointing' so many businesses were found to be operating without a licence. The seven dealers were given a warning and advice on how to apply for a licence. Another dealer found to be operating outside the terms of his licence was given a warning and advice. One unlicensed mobile collector had his load seized on site after questioning by police.

The Scrap Metal Dealers Act was introduced to combat scrap metal thefts, which have blighted communities.

By Adam Grinsell

"I also welcome the Government's awareness campaign to alert the public to this menace."

The arrests come after more than 5,700 complaints, largely to do with cons involving tax returns, driving licences and passports, were made to Citizens Advice and to the Advertising Standards Authority.

Consumer affairs Minister Jo Swinson said: "The enforcement action which the National Trading Standards eCrime team has taken demonstrates the Government's commitment to tackling these scammers. We will not let them get away with misleading consumers."

The five arrested last week, under the Fraud Act, have been released on police bail pending further investigations.

In an effort to force fraudsters out of business NTSB chairman Lord Harris said its eCrime team is now 'making it as difficult as possible for these online hoaxers to operate', and the Government has launched an awareness campaign.

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FOCUS ON CRADLEY & CRADLEY HEATH

Council will meet residents to discuss derelict shops

EMPLOYERS have taken part in a job fair with a twist. The Salvation Army in Cradley Heath held a special Employment Plus event to showcase the skills and abilities of its job seekers.

But unlike the usual format of a job fair, it wasn't employers promoting vacancies and training, instead a group of prospective employees hosted stalls promoting their skill sets to the employers.

The two-hour session was held at the venue on Meredith Street on July 10.

James Morris, Conservative MP for Halesowen and Rowley Regis and Margaret James, Conservative MP for Stourbridge both offered advice to job seekers. Planning has already started for the next event, to get involved are invited to contact Julie Brown on 07726 995946.

Fire station opens soon

BUILDING work is nearly finished on a multi-million pound fire station.

Work is on track for the £3 million Haden Cross Community Fire Station, serving Halesowen and Cradley Heath, to be open by the end of August at the junction of Barrs Road and Halesowen Road, where municipal buildings once stood. The former Halesowen station in Hagley Road was sold for redevelopment and the Cradley Heath station is being sold.

DERELICT shops which have sparked a residents' campaign will be the main topic for a meeting with councillors this week.

Council workers were forced to board up the shops in Colley Gate, Cradley, after repeated calls for action from campaigners. The shops were targeted by arsonists twice last month and subjected to repeated vandalism attacks.

Members of Cradley Action group have held regular public meetings in a bid to press Dudley Council into action.

Now council bosses have arranged to chair a meeting tomorrow regarding the derelict buildings. Dudley Council has called a meeting involving the emergency services and the residents action group in the area.

Founder of the group, Chris Legiewicz, said: "I was ecstatic to hear that Dudley Council wanted to meet with us, it has been a long time coming and I look forward to speaking with them. We have been waiting along time for this to happen and we want something done."

She said that she hoped the meeting would prove useful but was worried that it might be politicised.

She added: "I will be very annoyed if I find that something could have been done years ago. This is not just an issue for Cradley, there a

By Tom Mason

number of towns and areas with dangerous buildings like this."

Officials say that the meeting is being held to ensure all public bodies are working together to halt the vandalism. They will also update residents on plans for redeveloping the site. Four developers are bidding to transform the row of shops into a new shopping area.

Dudley Council's deputy leader, Councillor Pete Lowe said: "Having attended one of the action group meetings, I was very impressed by the way the group has organised itself and I am acutely aware of the impact that derelict premises such as these can have on local communities. That is why as a council we are working hard to find a development partner to bring forward a scheme."



The alleyway off Stacey Close in Cradley Heath where a wall collapsed after heavy rain

Wall falls down after downpour

URGENT repair work will be carried out on a wall which collapsed after heavy downpours.

A public footpath had to be shut off on Saturday afternoon due to health and safety concerns when a large part of the wall collapsed, leaving a gaping hole.

Bricks lay across the ground from the ruined wall in Stacey Close, Cradley Heath, leaving residents unable to walk through the alleyway which connects to nearby Clyde Street. Ward councillor Julie Webb said: "I can understand residents must be worried because this footpath is used quite frequently."

Crews from Cradley Heath, who were called out at 1.30pm, and engineers were assessing the damage this week. Watch commander Stuart Campbell said: "It looks as if it just caved in under the pressure but luckily no-one was injured."

Service to mark First World War

A SERVICE to commemorate the centenary of the First World War will take place in Cradley on August 3. The Royal British Legion will lead the remembrance service with bugler Stephen Bradley at Overend Methodist Mission.

Among the 16 million people killed during the four-year conflict were at least 133 young men who lived in Cradley.

The service will be a tribute to them and residents will be telling stories of ancestors who fought for their country. Extracts from letters of Cradley servicemen will be read out by members of their families.

Candles will be lit to recognise the part played by women, to remember those who had a conscientious objection to war and to acknowledge those from the British Empire who gave their lives. The service will start at 6pm.

Music and nature days

FROM relaxing in the gardens to music, there's plenty on offer for free at Haden Hill Park and Museum.

A musical workshop will be held on August 3 where youngsters will be given the chance to play some familiar and unusual instruments. Admission is free and there will also be a trail around the house. The event is 2pm to 4.30.

A nature day with the RSPB will be held on August 8. Call 01384 569444 for details.

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Community united by events to honour Danni

DOZENS of people turned out for a charity event in memory of 14-year-old Danni Burrows from Lower Gornal, who died after a battle with bone cancer.

The popular teenager had received treatment at Birmingham Children's Hospital before she died on July 5.

Friends from Ellowes Hall Sports College have organised various events in her honour and people gathered at The Bulls Head pub, in Gornal, for a charity head shave on her name.

Friends Ryan Cherrington, aged 18, and Josh Webb, 17, who attended the same school as Danni, decided to take part in a charity head shave and hope to have raised over£1,000.

Ryan's mother Samantha Cherrington said she had first become aware of Danni's plight after her

own daughter Abby, 15, struck up a friendship with her and Danni's death had since had a major impact on the school and community.

"It has hit everyone at the school really hard," said the 38-year-old from Forest Road, Dudley.

"It was good to see everyone come together."

Balloons

Hundreds of yellow balloons were released in her memory by school friends on fields near her home at Milking Bank earlier this month.

The school is now planning to hold various fundraisers in aid of the Teenage Cancer Trust.

Friends and family set up to a Facebook page in her memory that has been inundated with hundreds of messages and tributes.



At the Bulls Head, from left, teenagers Josh Webb and Ryan Cherrington take part in a sponsored headshave

Priory pupils are proud to win praise

A ONCE failing school in Dudley has pulled itself out of special measures to be rated 'good' by education watchdogs for the first time.

Priory Primary School received a glowing report from Ofsted this month. It came two years after a series of failings at the school which landed it in special measures.

But now inspectors say the strong recovery means the school is 'on track to be outstanding'.

Areas such as teaching, the behaviour of pupils and leadership were all praised.

Headteacher Jill Bennett said: "We are delighted with the incredible turn around we have managed to make in just two years and that is testament to a lot of hard work. We now have a team of enthusiastic teaching staff, pupils who are excited about learning and an extremely supportive set of governors. We will continue to work to drive standards even higher."

In the report, inspectors said: "The children are proud of their school and speak highly of it. The children have really bought into the idea of turning their school around."

MP warns of holiday health card website con

HOLIDAYMAKERS are being warned to avoid 'rip-off' websites that charge them or free health insurance cards.

British citizens are entitled to European Health Insurance Cards (EHIC) that let them get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free in other European Union countries.

It is free to apply for them but there are websites that charge people a fee. Some charge around £24.99.

But Adrian Bailey, MP for West Bromwich West, stressed that people did not need to pay.

He said he was aware that the number of applications for EHICs increase considerably in the summer but that there were 'some ruthless websites' who are taking advantage of holiday-makers by charging a fee for the free cards.

Mr Bailey said: "I am pleased to learn that the Government has been working with Google to take action to stamp out these websites who mislead the public and charge for this free service as well as other Government services.

"Often people are charged because they are directed through to these websites via an advertisement and then this becomes part of the holiday package when in fact there should be no charge at all.

"I understand Google has already taken action against a number of these website. It does seem that there are some people who are always prepared to rip-off the public whenever the opportunity arises and the Gov-

By Daniel Wainwright

ernment and Google have my full support in stamping out this practice once and for all."

One website that comes high on the list following a Google search for 'European Health Insurance Card' is europeanhealthcard.org.uk claims a 'processing fee' is required.

Trading standards officers have warned people to check they are not falling victim to services that charge them needlessly for help with official documents.

People were reporting that when they searched online for passports and driving licences, they were clicking on the sites of private companies who offered to process the application on their behalf. The websites are not illegal but charge people for a verification service they often do not need. The Advertising Standards Agency labels them 'copycat sites'.

Information about the EHIC and official application can be found on www.gov.uk/european-health-insurance-card or calling 0300 300 1300.

National award for helping people

A SERVICE for people with disabilities has beaten competition from around the country to win a national award.

The Queens Cross Network in Dudley has been hailed as the best service in the UK for improving people's skills and confidence and helping them gain employment.

It has won the Putting People First Award, as part of the Great British Home Care Awards.

The awards, which are supported by the Department of Health and hosted by United Kingdom Home Care Association, celebrate excellence in the social care sector.

The Queens Cross Network received the accolade for supporting disabled people across the borough to help run services themselves, through the disability user-led organisation Disability In Action, at the Dudley centre. These include a reception meet and greet service, a peer support advice service and a cafe.

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Long hours are not productive

A BRIERLEY Hill lawyer has called for an end to the 'burning the midnight oil' culture in the workplace, saying it is hampering productivity.

Hannah Scott, an employment lawyer at Waldron's in Brierley Hill, said a new survey showed that almost half of UK managers work an extra day of unpaid overtime each week. The survey by the Institute for Leadership and Management follows changes to the law which give Britain's workforce the right to ask for flexible working hours, rather than just parents and carers.

Miss Scott said: "There is a burning the midnight oil culture here in the UK where those chained to their desk for the longest get a pat on the back, yet we are proven to be less productive than many of our European neighbours."

£58k bill for man who sold fake designer clothes on eBay

THE boss of an online clothes business who sold counterfeit designer brands via internet auction site eBay has been ordered to pay £58,000.

Matthew Brown ran Squashed Frog Clothing Company Ltd from his bedroom in his parents' house in Copper Beech Drive in Wombourne, Stafford Crown Court heard. The 30-year-old was importing clothes from China and Bangladesh before selling them on eBay.

But a brand protection officer from Dutch designer company G-Star bought a T-shirt and found it to be fake, informing police and Trad-

ing Standards officials at Staffordshire County Council.

Police went to Brown's home and seized 140 boxes from a warehouse in Kingswinford. These included 1,890 fake G-Star T-shirts and 84 fake Superdry swimming shorts.

Checks on his computer found Brown had used search engines to question the legitimacy of his supplier.

Mr Tony Watkin, prosecuting, said: "He had been trading for around eight months and said G-Star and other brands came from supplier Clever Cloggs Clothing. He said he never con-

tacted the original brand owners but said it had been part of his future plans to do that."

Mr Philip Morris, defending, said the fake items had been a 'small' part of the business.

Brown and the company were found guilty by magistrates on four counts of possessing and selling counterfeit goods after a three-day trial.

Brown was sentenced to a six-week suspended prison sentence and the company to a two-year conditional discharge. Brown was also told to repay £54,000, £4,000 costs and an £80 victim surcharge. The company must pay £4,000 costs and a £15 surcharge.

Wild West baby charity success

ALMOST £4,000 was raised by families during a fundraiser to help support a children's charity.

Families and young babies from Dudley and Kidderminster took part in the event for the charity Tommy's.

Around 360 babies were involved in the Sensathon day which had a range of events taking place on a wild west theme.

The event was held at the Kiddicare store at Merry Hill shopping centre by the Dudley Baby Sensory group.

Manager Jas Bansal said: "All the mums and dads had gone the whole way in supporting the day, putting together amazing cowboy and cowgirl outfits for their little ones and some even turned up in fancy dress themselves."

Baby group marks its birthday



Parent volunteers Joanne Weston, of Stourbridge, and Stacey Tyler-Crisp, of Quarry Bank

A GROUP supporting the families of premature and poorly babies has celebrated its fifth anniversary.

Dudley Bliss has supported more than 50 families and is run by volunteers.

Group members have supported families at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital neonatal unit by giving gifts and cards at Christmas, Mother's Day and Father's Day, and during visits to give support to families.

It celebrated with a party at Stourbridge Children's Centre featuring a special Dudley Bliss cake. More than 30 children received a gift of a book. The party was part funded by the proceeds of a Father's Day fun day and raffle organised by the group, which raised around £2,700.

Dudley Bliss is organised by three parent volunteers, Joanne Weston, Stacey Tyler-Crisp and Claire Swatman, who have all

had poorly or premature babies themselves. Stacey, who recently won the Mayor's Award at the We Love Carers 2014 awards ceremony, said: "I love my volunteering role for Bliss, helping to run Dudley Bliss and supporting parents on the unit."

"The group also gives me support as I've had three premature babies, the youngest of which has just turned four years."

"Whilst my commitment is to our members and families, it is nice to receive some recognition."

Dudley Bliss holds monthly get-togethers for families who have had babies on any neonatal unit and who live in or near Dudley borough.

For further information visit www.dudleybliss.org.uk, look for Dudley Bliss on Facebook, or contact them via email dudleybliss@live.co.uk.

Police promoting summer of sport

WEST Midlands Police is set to launch a summer sports programme across the Black Country for people aged between 14 and 25.

The Sportivate initiative, which has been organised by officers in Wolverhampton, will run for six weeks and includes boxing, dancing and sailing among other sports.

It is funded by Sport England and runs with the help of the Wolverhampton Amateur Boxing Club, Sonia Webb Academy of Dance and Himley Hall Sailing Club.

People of all abilities and experience are invited to take part.

Limited free transport will be available to and from the clubs, with a number of pick up points stationed across Wolverhampton.

For information on how to join visit www.facebook.com/wolverhamptonpolice

Old Mill will open again

A PUB closed for four months is set to re-open after undergoing a major refurbishment.

The Old Mill in Windmill Street, Upper Gornal, is one of the chain of 20 pubs owned by Woodsetton-based Holden's Brewery.

Estate manager Mick Doherty said that a six-figure sum was spent on renovating and partly re-building the building, which is more than 100 years old. The pub closed on March 17 and is on target to re-open in mid August.

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18 Storms hit events and flood roads

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, July 24, 2014

HEAVY rain flooded many parts of Dudley, causing havoc on the roads. A month's rain fell in a matter of hours, causing some streets to become impassable.

A man hole cover was dislodged by flooding in Pennett Road, Brierley Hill. Motorists said the water was two feet deep.

A stretch of the Bridgnorth Road at Stourton was also flooded.

Footpath

In Cradley Heath part of a brick wall collapsed, forcing closure of a public footpath.

Despite the downpours, people did take to the streets for the Halesowen Victorian Fair on Saturday. Chairman for the fair's steering group Tony Billingham said: "The event went well but the rain definitely affected the number of people who came this year."

Organisers of the Brickhouse Festival in Rowley Regis were forced to call off their event due to the heavy rain.

Hot weather with some thundery showers are forecast for this weekend.



Nicci and Mark had their marriage blessed on the same cruise ship where they first met

Cruise ship proved a love boat for this happy couple

THEY barely made any romantic waves when they first met on a cruise ship.

In fact Nicci Harper and Mark Hodgkins' friendship fizzled out when their week-long tour of the Mediterranean came to an end.

But one year later, opportunity came knocking again and this time their holiday cruise liner really did prove to be a 'love boat' for the couple.

Sea

Despite going their own ways after their initial trip, they were able to rekindle their friendship and it blossomed into romance when, purely by coincidence, their paths crossed while at sea once again 12 months later.

And when the pair decided to tie

the knot, where did they receive a marriage blessing? Where else but the very cruise ship where they had met twice before.

Nicci, of High Street, Wordsley, said the pair met for the first time in 2010 on a Thomson Dream cruise liner, which included Rome and Barcelona in its ports of call.

Twelve months later Nicci, 46, and Mark, 52, who is from Yorkshire, boarded the same ship for a seven day break, each with their own group of friends.

Nicci continued: "We were sat on the deck and Mark just walked past. I couldn't believe it when I saw him."

"We spent the whole week together and it was different from the year before."

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Warning as tunnel work brings city road chaos

MOTORISTS are facing delays, buses are being diverted, and theatregoers urged to leave their cars at home with the closure of major tunnels in Birmingham.

People travelling to and from the city centre have already been struck in long queues on surrounding roads including the Aston Expressway since the A38 tunnels shut to all traffic at 10pm on Friday.

The 40-year-old tunnels are closed for the second summer in a row to enable the second phase of restoration work to be carried out. Restrictions are in place in Bridge Street and Paradise Circus as well as Snow Hill Queensway.

By Heather Large

Roundabout

Temporary traffic lights are also in place on the Hagley Road inbound slip road onto Five Ways roundabout.

To help ease the traffic on the roads, Centro has been offering a special ticket deals for public transport during the week. A bus pass, which costs £90, will cover all bus travel throughout the region during the closure period, while the Network Tunnel Special will cost £150 and will cover all bus, tram and rail travel.

Eddie Fellows, highways network manager for Amey, which is carrying out the work, said: "It is important to stress that disruption was kept to a minimum last year because so many people heeded the advice to leave the car at home. If we do not get similar numbers of people making the change again this year, motorists may encounter significant delays."

Bosses at Birmingham Hippodrome, who are expecting thousands to visit during the summer to see its production of Wicked, are advising people to consider using train and bus services rather than driving to the venue.

The New Alexandra Theatre is also advising people about the closures and the impact it could have on journey times.

A warning notice on the Hippodrome's website says: "If you are visiting the Hippodrome during this time, please consider how you will travel to the venue and whether train and bus services may be more viable than driving."

After September 1 there will be overnight closures until September 29.

There are approximately 120 people working in the tunnels at any one time and works will be ongoing 24 hours-a-day. The upgrade includes renewing the ventilation system, security and communications systems, refurbishing pumping stations and plant rooms.

Boer War memories sought for new book

AN AUTHOR researching a book on the Boer War is asking for help from the public.

Jan Robinson wants to hear from people in Staffordshire and the West Midlands who may have had a relative who fought in the conflict.

Her book, called Pen and Sword, is due to be published next year.

Some 22,000 British soldiers died in the conflict which took place between 1899-1902 in the heat of the South African sun just 12 years before the First World War.

Men of both the South and North Staffordshire Regiments are commemorated in West Bromwich, Willenhall and in Lichfield Cathedral. The author said: "It is a war very much overshadowed by the First World War. I am particularly interested in the lives of ordinary soldiers during the war and of their families in its aftermath."

She can be contacted at jane_robins@hotmail.co.uk

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MP's joy as asthma inhaler ban lifted

A CAMPAIGNING MP has welcomed a Government decision to lift a ban on schools keeping spare inhalers, which she believes will save lives.

Margot James, the MP for Stourbridge, was among those calling for a change in the law to help children who could otherwise die needlessly from an asthma attack. The blue reliever inhalers, most commonly used to treat asthma attacks, are prescription-only medicines and that meant schools were not allowed to keep a spare inhaler for emergencies involving children who did not have their own.

Charity Asthma UK says 1.1 million children with the condition across the UK are at risk because schools are not allowed to keep an extra device in case of emergency.

Having campaigned on this issue for the past 12 months, Miss James pressed Health Minister Jane Ellison for an update and was told legislation would be put in place with the law change coming into force on October 1.

Miss James said: "I am delighted that the government has listened to the concerns of local parents and teachers. The change in the law will come into place early in the new school year."

Firefighter dies aged 50

A LEADING figure in the West Midlands Fire Service has died at the age of 50.

Tributes have been paid to firefighter Paul Cockburn, who was Fire Brigades Union Secretary for West Midlands Fire Service.

Mr Cockburn, from Birmingham, died on Saturday morning following a short battle with cancer.

He was a long-serving firefighter with the West Midlands Fire Service. He was a watch commander and served at a number of stations in the south Birmingham area.

He had been a union member for 24 years and had campaigned for better pay and conditions.

Evening walk

AN evening walk is being held in Aldridge tonight, Thursday. The Walsall Group of the Ramblers sets off from Aldridge Parish Church in The Green at 7pm. The circular walk is three-and-a-half miles long, on field paths and lanes. For details call 01922 683672.

Cleaning up to mark milestone

THE 2014 Big Spring Clean is in full swing with more than 1,500 volunteers taking part in over 50 events in Sandwell so far this year.

And there's still plenty of time to get involved with the award winning campaign run by Sandwell Council, Serco and local charity Litter Watch. The Big Spring Clean runs until October.

The scheme urges people to take part in litter picking and improvement events across the borough.

The theme of this year's Big Spring Clean is 40 – coinciding with the 40th anniversary of the borough of Sandwell.

The campaign is targeting more than 40 miles of litter picking on pavements, planting 40 trees, working with 40 schools and painting 40 metres of fencing and railings across the borough.

To get involved call 0121 544 3916, email bigspringclean.sandwell@serco.com or visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/bigspringclean.

New gun law leads police to declare a firearms amnesty

Wooden it be nice to carve out a career



Wood turner Bill Wilkinson with a piece of his work at his workshop at Halfpenny Green Vineyard

SCULPTURE doesn't come more natural than this to wood turner Bill Wilkinson.

Ornate designs are crafted inside his workshop based at Halfpenny Green vineyard, near Stourbridge.

The talented 53-year-old from Sedgley decided to carve out a new career for himself after developing a passion for wood working when faced with the challenge to create a doll's house for daughter Kelly.

Recycled

On leaving his career in health and social care he decided to start up a new wood crafts business.

His business has been based at the vineyard, off Tom Lane, near Bobbington, for the past three years.

A motorised turner is used to spin a piece of recycled timber with the operator then using tools including chisels to carve the wood.

Mr Wilkinson produces a range of gifts including jewellery boxes and other bespoke pieces.

POLICE have launched a guns amnesty following a law change that will see anyone found with a firearm risking a life sentence

The new legislation increases the maximum jail term for illegal gun possession from 10 years to life – and that includes anyone who is storing a weapon for someone else.

The Home Office amendments also clamp down on antique firearms amid fears obsolete weapons are being made viable by criminals. Anyone given a prison sentence, including suspended sentences, of three months or more is now banned from possessing this type of gun which could previously be held as an ornament with a relevant certificate.

Those who have them must now make arrangements to dispose of them

By John Scott

and, to ensure none are dumped or fall into the wrong hands. West Midlands Police will allow guns to be handed over at police stations.

The amnesty that includes handguns, rifles, BB guns, imitation firearms, ammunition or antiques means people can do this without risk of prosecution until August 2.

Detective Inspector Andy Bannister, said: "The problem of antique weapons being used in crime is a threat we need to address. We welcome tighter controls that close any loopholes that may be exploited by criminals."

"People need to ask themselves – are you prepared to risk a life behind bars by holding a firearm for another person?"

Firearms can be taken to any one of the 41 police stations across the West

Midlands – 11 of which have round-the-clock front desks – but people are advised to check station opening times in advance.

The last amnesty, in 2003, saw 1,265 firearms plus 53,190 rounds of ammunition handed over to West Midlands Police as part of a month-long nationwide amnesty.

Det Insp Bannister added: "People can hand over weapons anonymously but the history of any live weapons surrendered will be checked for evidence of its use in crimes. However, someone found in possession of a firearm in public cannot simply claim they were on their way to surrender the weapon. They would need to prove they had good intentions and we will take into account their location, the time and the manner in which the weapon was being carried."

If you suspect anyone to be involved in illegal firearms call 101 or Crimes-toppers on 0800 555111.

British Gas jobs boost welcomed

PLANS by British Gas to create 300 jobs including 37 in the Black Country have been welcomed.

New posts in customer service will be created at the company's contact centre in Wolverhampton Road, Oldbury.

At least a dozen of the jobs across the country will go to school leavers.

John Spellar, MP for Warley, said: "This is very good news and I congratulate British Gas. This is a vote of confidence in the Sandwell workforce."

The new recruits will be based British Gas contact centres in Oldbury, Uddington, Edinburgh and Cardiff.

Kevin Roxburgh, director of customer services at British Gas, said: "These new jobs are critical to delivering the service our customers expect."

"Contact centres like ours in Oldbury are vital."

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End of 40 year career at school

FROM pupil and football team player to PE teacher and finally headteacher – Steve Venross knows an Oldbury school better than most.

However, all good things have to come to an end and the 61-year-old last week stepped down from his role at Bristnall Hall Academy after almost 40 years of teaching at the school.

There were farewells with past students and members of the local community invited into the school. The celebrations culminated with a presentation on Friday.

He was joined by the teacher who inspired him, Dave Parry, also a former headteacher, at the school.

Mr Venross said: "It was my second year at the school when I got my inspiration to become a teacher, and it was from my technical drawing teacher Mr Parry. "It was his passion for the students and attempt to make a difference which impressed me so much at that young age. I can only hope I had the same impact on my pupils."

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John Rutter's Christmas Celebration at the Royal Albert Hall

Two days departing December 11

Pick of the week



★ **PRICE FROM £109**

The music of Christmas time would not be complete without that of renowned composer and conductor John Rutter.

This is a chance to join him as he brings together the beautiful voices of a special guest choir and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, to raise the roof of the Royal Albert Hall with a selection of Christmas carols, choral pieces and orchestral works.

Included is a side circle ticket for the afternoon performance of this classic festive favourite, which also includes numerous sing-along carols.

A visit to Hyde Park, in the heart of London, for the magical Winter Wonderland event is also part of the itinerary. Here there are live shows, fun fair rides and the largest outdoor ice rink in the capital.

Browse the gifts and crafts of the market stalls, which offer a refreshing alternative to the high street goods, and warm up with tasty seasonal treats.

Please note entry to the Hyde Park Winter Wonderland is free, but there is a charge for some of the attractions including the ice rink and rides.

INFO

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Ticket to John Rutter's Christmas Celebration at the Royal Albert Hall
- Visit to Hyde Park Winter Wonderland
- Services to a tour driver
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Paddy Power Gold Cup

Two days departing November 15

★ **PRICE FROM £99**

- Return coach travel
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation
- Entrance to the Best Mate enclosure
- Visit to Bath
- Services of a tour driver
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

André Rieu and the Johann Strauss Orchestra in London

Two days departing December 19 and 20

★ **PRICE FROM £185**

- Return coach travel
- Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation
- Seated ticket to see André Rieu and the Johann Strauss Orchestra at Wembley Arena (upgrade offered)
- Return coach transfers between the hotel and Wembley Arena
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTA V787X)

Longleat Safari and Adventure Park

Two days departing October 11

★ **PRICE FROM £119***

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Admission to Longleat Safari and Adventure Park
- Visit to Bath
- Services of a tour driver
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

*Child price from £109 (conditions apply)
Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Walking for Softies in North Devon

Four days departing October 17

★ **PRICE FROM £225**

- Return coach travel
- Three nights half-board accommodation
- Two fully guided walks in North Devon
- Visit to Barnstaple
- Services of a tour driver
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Buckingham Palace

Day trip departing September 21

★ **PRICE FROM £59**

- Return coach travel
- Entrance to Buckingham Palace including the Royal Childhood exhibition
- Services of a tour driver

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Beamish and the North York Moors Railway

Four days departing October 10

★ **PRICE FROM £249**

- Return coach travel
- Three nights half-board accommodation
- Admission to Beamish – The Living Museum of the North
- Ride on the North York Moors Railway
- Visits to Whitby, Harrogate and Richmond
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTA V787X)

The Tall Ships Regatta at Royal Greenwich

Two days departing September 6

★ **PRICE FROM £99**

- Return coach travel
- Overnight half-board accommodation
- Visit to Royal Greenwich for the Tall Ships Regatta
- Visit to Royal Windsor
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Isle of Wight and Osborne House

Three days departing September 26

★ **PRICE FROM £179**

- Return coach travel and ferry crossings
- Two nights half-board accommodation
- Entrance to Osborne House and Queen Victoria's private beach
- Visits to Yarmouth, Alum Bay, Godshill, Newport and Ryde
- Services of a tour driver
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

Lake Garda, Venice and Verona

Eight days various departure dates

★ **PRICE FROM £599**

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- Tour of the Dolomite mountains
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Certain entrance fees payable locally
Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

André Rieu and the Johann Strauss Orchestra in Brussels

Three days departing November 14

★ **PRICE FROM £274**

- Return coach and Channel crossings
- Two nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- Seated ticket to see André Rieu and the Johann Strauss Orchestra at the new Palais 12 Arena in Brussels (upgrades offered)
- Return coach transfers to and from the concert venue
- Visit to Brussels
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Newmarket Promotions (ABTA V787X)

Bruges by Eurostar

Four days various departure dates

★ **PRICE FROM £299**

- Return standard class seat on Eurostar
- Return rail connection to London
- Return coach transfer overseas
- Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- Guided walking tour of Bruges
- Visit to traditional chocolate maker
- Visit to Ypres and the First World War battlefields
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Certain entrance fees payable locally
Organised by RivieraTravel (ABTA V4744)



Dame Janet in South African play

ACCLAIMED Johannesburg-born actress Jane Suzman is appearing at Birmingham Rep alongside up-and-coming young South African actor Khayalethu Anthony in Solomon and Marion, written and directed by Lara Foot.

The production in the Rep Studio from October 16 to November 1 will pair Dame Janet, who was nominated for an Oscar in 1971 for her role as the Tsarina in Nicholas and Alexandra, with the 26-year-old actor who played a radical prisoner in Mandela biopic Long Walk to Freedom.

Set in South Africa as unrest precedes the 2010 World Cup, it charts the relationship between an elderly widow and the grandson of her former servant. Call 0121 236 4455.

Satellite rockers come in to land

PROGRESSIVE rock band Anathema will be playing Wolverhampton's Slade Rooms on September 25.

The concert will come hot on the heels of the release of the Liverpool band's 10th studio album, Distant Satellites, which was launched this summer. Distant Satellites is a follow-up to the 2012 album Weather Systems and was recorded in Oslo. Tickets are priced £16.50.

Birmingham heavy metal veterans Jameson Raid will be playing their only UK date this year in Bilston.

The band, formed in 1975, play at the Robin 2 on November 24. Tickets in advance are £10.

Magical show puts spellbinding spin on much-loved tale of Oz

Wicked logistics on stage

BACK stage at a London West End hit, where the show remains in one venue for a long run, certainly takes some organisation but just imagine how complicated it is for a touring production which moves from city to city.

That is precisely what Anthony Field, the company manager for the 2014 UK tour of hit musical Wicked, faces on a regular basis. As Wicked takes up residence at Birmingham Hippodrome along with it comes no less than 12 HGVs full of all things green, to ensure audiences are treated to an amazing theatrical experience.

Sublime organisation is the key and at any one of the nine productions of Wicked currently running across the world, every item is placed in exactly the same spot backstage, thus ensuring that the resident stage crew is able to create as perfect a performance as possible.



Mean green machine — the Oz head from hit musical Wicked Photo: Christopher Davies

I WILL never be able to watch The Wizard of Oz in the same way again. Judy Garland and her pals can follow their Yellow Brick Road from here to eternity now, I feel deceived.

I always had a bit of sympathy for the Wicked Witch — she did find her sister squashed — but now I fully appreciate what a bad rap this scapegoat got.

My eyes have been opened thanks to the opening in Birmingham of Wicked, the untold stories of the witches of Oz. Judging by the reception from the Hippodrome crowd, there are a few more supporters in the Wicked Witch's green corner now.

Wicked is a captivating musical. It has all the magic (no pun intended) that you would expect from such a top-notch West End show.

There are some great hi-tech effects, choreography is superb and the costumes flamboyant. But it is also a clever story entwined with the Wizard of Oz that we know and love, reflecting the plot of the film yet ultimately leaving the audience distanced from the tale they thought they knew.

The star of the musical, Elphaba was played on press night by understudy Jemma Alexander — and what a performance she gave. She seamlessly transformed from 'freak' to heroine, winning the hearts of the audience with her grit yet obvious vulnerability.

A high point was her uplifting performance of Defying Gravity as she flew



Wicked's heroine Elphaba

above the stage. Emily Tierney put in a powerful performance as dizzy white witch Glinda who also undergoes a striking transformation of her own. The musical focuses on the relationship between Elphaba and Glinda. The two 'witches' were rightly rewarded with a standing ovation.

Wicked is spellbinding. An excellent cast, solid score and a thought-provoking story that makes you completely rethink the Wizard of Oz. Christmas viewing will never be the same. Runs until September 6.

Diane Davies

T.Rextasy born to boogie again

THOSE inspired by Marc Bolan musical 20th Century Boy, recently staged in Wolverhampton and Birmingham, can show that they were born to boogie again when top tribute act T.Rextasy Get It On at Bilston's Robin 2 venue on Saturday, August 23.

The corkscrew-haired groover, who would have been 67 this year had he survived a fatal car crash in 1977, is celebrated by amazing soundalike Daniel who has been playing the music of Bolan and T.Rex for more than 20 years. Get set for such classics as Metal Guru, Ride A White Swan, Hot Love and, of course, 20th Century Boy.

Tickets cost £12.50 in advance (call 01902 401211) or a £13.50 on the door.

Tim is to front the Jersey Boys

WEST End actor Tim Driesen has been cast as Frankie Valli in the touring production of hit musical Jersey Boys, which comes to Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre during the festive season.

Driesen has been leading the cast in the Dutch production of the show and has also performed in Rock of Ages and Never Forget in the West End.

The story of the 1960s and 70s hitmakers The Four Seasons, recently made into a movie by director Clint Eastwood, makes its first Midlands appearance at Stoke Regent Theatre October 28 to November 8 before its Brum stint from December 9 to January 3.

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CHOICE



Jacques Peretti

The Men Who Made Us Spend (BBC2, 9.10pm)

Jacques Peretti visits American behavioural researchers who use their skills to help companies advertise goods to children, as he explores the history behind marketing products to younger consumers. He talks to a Nickelodeon executive who brought American-style kids' TV to the UK and also meets a car designer who promoted his vehicle to the children in the back seat. Jacques reveals how these techniques have been applied to adults, and explores the rise of computer gaming for grown-ups and chats to the people behind the Neopets craze. Last in the series.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** Commonwealth Games. **12.00** BBC News: Weather. **12.15** Commonwealth Games. Live coverage of the mixed team triathlon relay. **3.00** Commonwealth Games. Continued coverage from Glasgow. **5.25** BBC News: Regional News: Weather. **5.45** Commonwealth Games. Further coverage on day three of the Games.

7.00 Commonwealth Games. Hazel Irvine and Gary Lineker introduce live coverage of this evening's swimming finals, which take place at Tollcross International Swimming Centre in Glasgow. The semi-finals in three events – the men's 100m freestyle and 50m backstroke, and women's 50m butterfly – are scheduled in the pool, along with seven finals, as the swimming timetable reaches the halfway point. The men's finals are the Para-Sports 200m freestyle S14, 100m breaststroke and 200m butterfly, with the women's being the 50m freestyle, 100m backstroke, 200m breaststroke and 4x200m freestyle relay. The men's butterfly race should involve Chad Le Clos, who became one of the global stars of the sport with his gold and silver medals at London 2012, and the South African also claimed five medals when the Commonwealth Games were held four years ago in India. There will also be plenty of interest for the home nations in the pool, notably in the women's 50m freestyle, which should feature England's Fran Halsall, who already has seven Commonwealth medals to her name, including a silver in this discipline in 2010. Plus, updates and reports on a variety of sports on day three of the Games, which has seen the start of the rugby sevens tournament and the conclusion of the rhythmic gymnastics and judo.

10.10 BBC News: Weather. **10.30** The National Lottery Live. **10.40** Tonight at the Games. Mark Chapman and Clare Balding present a round-up of the day's action on day three of the Commonwealth Games, featuring triathlon, swimming, netball and track cycling.

11.40 Commonwealth Games Sportsday.

11.55 Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.00** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Film: The Saint's Vacation. (1941) **7.00** Film: The Saint Meets the Tiger. (1943) **8.05** The Living Planet. (R) **9.00** Fred Dibnah's Industrial Age. (R) **9.30** Great British Railway Journeys. (R) **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. (R) **11.30** Food & Drink. (R) **12.00** Rick Stein's India. (R) **1.00** Bette Davis: Talking Pictures. (R) **1.45** Film: Now, Voyager. (1942) Romantic drama, starring Bette Davis and Claude Rains. **3.40** Flog It! **4.40** Hive Alive. (R) **5.40** Formula 1: Hungarian Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights.

6.55 Antiques Road Trip. Antique experts Charlie Ross and Thomas Plant begin the second leg of their journey in Bath, before travelling through the Cotswolds to an auction in Stroud, Gloucestershire. They then pick up bargains on the way through Worcestershire and finish at a saleroom in Wrexham, north Wales.

7.55 Dad's Army. Mainwaring and Wilson decide to recruit women into the platoon to take care of the less demanding tasks, but the captain loses his heart to an attractive widow. (R)

8.25 Proms Extra. New series. Katie Derham returns with the weekly magazine show, with highlights of the Proms so far and previews of this week's concerts. Plus, music by pianist Haochen Zhang.

9.10 The Men Who Made Us Spend. Jacques Peretti visits American behavioural researchers who use their skills to help companies advertise goods to children, as he explores the history behind marketing products to younger consumers. He talks to a Nickelodeon executive who brought American-style kids' TV to the UK and also meets a car designer who promoted his vehicle to the children in the back seat. Jacques reveals how these techniques have been applied to adults, and explores the rise of computer gaming for grown-ups and chats to the people behind the Neopets craze. Last in the series.

10.10 Commonwealth Games.

10.30 Film: Up in the Air. (2009) A corporate downsizing expert finds his emotionally detached lifestyle under threat from an executive with revolutionary ideas. Comedy drama, with George Clooney.

12.15 Film: Kluge. (1971)

ITV

6.00 CITY: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Dino Dan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.50** Animals. (R) **7.00** Animals. (R) **7.05** Sooty. (R) **7.20** Digimon Fusion. (R) **7.45** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.00** Adventure Time. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **10.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.20** ITV News: Weather. **11.30** Storage Hoarders. (R) **12.30** All Star Mr. & Mrs. (R) **1.30** Dinner Date. (R) **2.30** Film: The Mirror Crack'd. (1980) Miss Marple mystery, starring Angela Lansbury. **4.30** Film: Twister. (1996) Action thriller, with Helen Hunt and Bill Paxton.

6.35 Regional Programme: Weather. **6.45** ITV News: Weather.

7.00 You've Been Framed! Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, featuring everything from cute kids and crazy animals to pranks and painful-looking accidents. (R)

7.30 Tipping Point: Lucky Stars. X Factor winner Sam Bailey, Coronation Street star Hayley Tamaddon and gymnast-turned-2012 Strictly Come Dancing champion Louis Smith have a go on the arcade-style token-pushing machine. Dropping counters down a choice of four chutes, the celebrity contestants hope to knock piles of them off a moving shelf – and the more they collect, the better their chances of scooping the £20,000 prize for a charity of their choice. Game show, hosted by Ben Shephard.

8.30 Film: Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones. (2002) Jedi Knight Obi-Wan Kenobi and apprentice Anakin Skywalker are sent to protect Senator Padme Amidala from an assassin. However, as galactic civil war threatens to erupt, the pair are forced to split their efforts, leading Anakin into an ill-advised romance and the beginnings of a journey toward the dark side. George Lucas's second prequel to the original sci-fi trilogy, starring Ewan McGregor, Hayden Christensen, Natalie Portman and Christopher Lee.

11.10 ITV News: Weather.

11.30 Goodwood Festival of Speed 2014. Highlights from Goodwood House in West Sussex

12.30 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.40** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The Hoobs. (R) **7.00** Trans World Sport. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.55** Frasier. (R) **10.25** Frasier. (R) **10.50** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.15** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.40** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.05** The Simpsons. (R) **12.35** Speed with Guy Martin. (R) **1.40** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Ascot and York. **4.15** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.45** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.15** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.50** Come Dine with Me. (R)

6.20 Come Dine with Me. Driving instructor Alison Firth hosts the final dinner party in Warwickshire, and hopes that her 1980s disco-themed night will impress her guests. (R)

6.50 Channel 4 News.

7.05 Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year. George Clarke presides over the 2014 Shed of the Year competition, visiting a range of extraordinary and creative builds vying for the title across Britain. (R)

8.00 Grand Designs. Kevin McCloud follows the progress of Simon and Jill Bennett as they try to restore two timber-framed barns in Suffolk. The couple found out that one of the buildings is among the smallest surviving medieval guildhalls in the country, and while Kevin advises them to conserve it in its present state, Simon is determined to restore it to its former glory. (R)

9.00 Film: Paul. (2011) An alien held captive in a top-secret American military base escapes and hides out in the van of two English comic-book geeks on a tour of UFO hotspots. The wisecracking extraterrestrial enlists the duo's help in getting back to his spaceship, but they are soon pursued by government agents and unwittingly become kidnappers. Sci-fi comedy, starring Simon Pegg and Nick Frost, with the voice of Seth Rogen.

11.05 Alan Carr: Chatty Man Summer Special. The comedian is joined by Miranda Hart, Vin Diesel, The Inbetweeners stars and Rizzle Kicks for an evening of summertime fun and chat.

12.05 Film: Dreamgirls. (2006) **2.20** Utopia. (R) **3.15** Hollyoaks. **5.20** How to Cook Like Heston. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Power Rangers Megaforce. (R) **10.35** Power Rangers Megaforce. (R) **11.10** Access. **11.15** Big Brother. (R) **12.45** NCIS. (R) **1.40** NCIS. (R) **2.40** Film: Cahill, US Marshal. (1973) Western, starring John Wayne. **4.50** Film: Rio Lobo. (1970) Howard Hawks' Western, with John Wayne and Jorge Rivero.

7.00 5 News Weekend.

7.05 World's Craziest Weddings. Comedian Millo McCabe narrates a selection of incidents and stunts that made people's special days even more memorable, including footage of the world's first zero-gravity wedding. (R)

8.00 Baby Face Brides. Documentary following three couples from different backgrounds who all have something in common – the bride-to-be will be walking down the aisle as a teenager. Rebecca was pregnant when she got together with Aaron and they have a budget of £2,000 for their big day, while Lauren had been going out with Duncan for just four months when he proposed. Unemployed Ryan saved up to buy Emmie's ring and his mother and grandmother have taken control of organising the big day. (R)

9.00 Big Brother. Highlights of another 24 hours in the Big Brother house, including coverage of the latest eviction as seen from the point of view of the contestants, who share their diary-room thoughts on their recently departed friend – or enemy. Narrated by Marcus Bentley.

10.00 Autopsy: The Last Hours of Michael Hutchence. Richard Shepherd investigates the death of INXS frontman Michael Hutchence, who was found dead with a belt round his neck in his Sydney hotel room in November 1997. (R)

11.00 Big Brother's Bit on the Psych. Ryan Clark and Iain Lee present analysis of the housemates' behaviour, with input from psychologists and body-language experts.

12.00 SuperCasino. **3.10** The Dog Rescuers with Alan Davies. (R) **4.00** Great Scientists. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.10** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

10.00 Film: Blades of Glory (2007) **11.30** Family Guy **1.40** American Dad! **2.25** People Just Do Nothing **2.55** Impractical Jokers **3.55** Close

BBC Four

7.00 Human Planet **8.00** Treasures of Ancient Egypt **9.00** Inspector Montalbano **10.55** Pink Floyd: Wish You Were Here **11.55** Pink Floyd: A Delicate Sound of Thunder **1.30** Top of the Pops: 1979 **2.10** Commonwealth on Film **2.40** Treasures of Ancient Egypt **3.40** Close

ITV2

11.40 Take Me Out **1.05** The Only Way Is Essex **2.35** Dinner Date: Australia **3.30** You've Been Framed Rides Again! **4.30** You've Been Framed **5.30** Film: Cats & Dogs (2001) **7.15** Film: Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **9.00** Film: The 40 Year-Old Virgin (2005) **11.20** Film: Friends with Kids (2011) **1.35** The Maguluf Weekend **2.25** Crazy Beaches **2.45** Nicki Minaj: The Hot Desk **2.55** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

12.15 Inspector Morse **4.55** A Touch of Frost **7.00** Lewis **9.00** Foyle's War **11.00** Bomb Girls **12.00** A Touch of Frost **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4

11.00 Storage Wars **11.55** The Cycle Show **1.00** Tour de France Highlights **2.00** Tour de France Live. Stage 20 from Bergerac to Perigueux. **5.00** Storage Wars **6.00** British Superbike Championship Highlights **7.00** Tour de France Highlights **8.00** Film: From Russia with Love (1963) **10.25** Film: The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford (2007) **1.35** Motorway Patrol **2.00** Tour de France Highlights **3.00** Teleshopping **3.30** The Store **5.30** Teleshopping

E4

11.00 Rules of Engagement **1.30** Suburgatory **2.00** Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. **3.00** How I Met Your Mother **4.00** The Big Bang Theory **5.00** How I Met Your Mother **6.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **7.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** The 100 **9.00** Film: Hitman (2007) **10.50** The Big Bang Theory **11.50** Virtually Famous **12.35** Ride Tube **1.40** How I Met Your Mother **2.35** Bob's Burgers **4.05** Glee **4.45** Desperate Housewives

Film4

11.00 The Last Mimzy (2007) **1.00** Hope Floats (1998) **3.15** Gulliver's Travels (2010) **4.55** The Love Bug (1968) **7.10** Stormbreaker (2006) **9.00** Sleepy Hollow (1999) **11.05** End of Days (1999) **1.25** Predator (1987) **3.40** Close

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CHOICE



Tom's Fantastic Floating Home
(Channel 4, 7pm)
New series. Tom Lawton has been responsible for a host of inventions, including skate bikes, 360-degree bubble cameras, wind-powered lighting systems and recordable alarm clocks. In this programme, he is using his creative imagination to transform a derelict boat into a home filled with practical inventions for everyday life. He begins by tackling the challenges of shelter and security, coming up with an 'all-seeing eye' to ward off intruders, an armadillo-inspired retractable roof and a garden that maintains itself.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **8.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **8.55** Commonwealth Games. **12.00** Commonwealth Games. Continued coverage from Glasgow. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Commonwealth Games. The opening track events at Hampden Park. **4.50** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **5.10** Formula 1: Hungarian Grand Prix Highlights. **6.30** **Commonwealth Games.** Hazel Irvine presents further coverage of the fourth day of the Games in Glasgow, including athletics and track cycling. **7.10** **Commonwealth Games.** Gary Lineker introduces the concluding live coverage on day four of the Games in Glasgow, featuring the latest night in the pool at Tollcross International Swimming Centre. The semi-finals of the men's 50m breaststroke and 100m butterfly, and women's 100m freestyle and 100m breaststroke are on the agenda this evening, along with seven finals, including the men's 50m backstroke, 100m freestyle and 4x200m freestyle relay. The backstroke promises to be fast and furious, featuring as it does a one-length sprint for glory, and England's Liam Tancock won gold four years ago in Delhi in a new Games record, as he did in the 100m, making him one of the stand-out performers in the pool as the England squad finished well behind Australia in the standings. The Australians have since unearthed another star in the shape of James Magnussen, who will expect to be victorious in the freestyle, having won silver at London 2012 to add to his two world championship triumphs. As for the home support, they will be cheering on Scotland in the relay, in which they won silver four years ago – one of only six medals they managed to win in the swimming events. Coverage continues on BBC Two. **10.05** BBC News. **10.30** **Tonight at the Games.** Mark Chapman and Clare Balding present a round-up of the fourth day's action. **11.40** **Commonwealth Games Sportsday.** Katherine Downes presents a round-up of the fourth day's events in Glasgow. **11.55** **Weather for the Week Ahead.** **12.00** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 **Film:** The Gay Falcon. (1941) **7.20** Monty Don's French Gardens. (R) **8.20** Countryside. (R) **9.05** Gardeners' World. (R) **9.35** The Beechgrove Garden. **10.05** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.35** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **12.05** Rick Stein's India. (R) **1.05** **Film:** Cimarron. (1960) Western, starring Glenn Ford. **3.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.15** Songs of Praise. **4.50** Commonwealth Games. Featuring the men's 5,000m final. **6.30** **Flog It! Trade Secrets.** Paul Martin and the show's experts offer advice on making money from antique domestic tools, including the most expensive ear cleaner that James Lewis has ever encountered. **7.00** **Antiques Road Trip.** Thomas Plant and Charlie Ross visit Church Stretton, Welsphool, Oswestry, Wrexham, Lichfield and Walsall before ending at their final auction showdown in Bedford. **8.00** **Dragons' Den.** Two entrepreneurs try to impress Peter Jones by eating their own brand of dog food, and the Dragons are entertained during a pitch by a colourful Indian dance troupe. **9.00** **Red Arrows: Inside the Bubble.** The Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team – more commonly known as the Red Arrows – is based at RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire and has taken part in more than 4,500 displays since 1965. This documentary offers an insight into the day-to-day work and lives of the 120-strong team of pilots and ground crew as they prepare to mark the unit's 50th display season, with celebrations reflecting how the Red Arrows remain the public face of the RAF, helping with recruitment and acting as ambassadors for the United Kingdom. **10.05** **Commonwealth Games.** The concluding coverage on day four of the Games, which are being staged in Glasgow. **10.30** **QI XL.** Extended edition. Victoria Wood, Richard Osman and Jason Manford join Alan Davies on the comedy quiz, with host Stephen Fry asking questions on the theme of the kitchen sink. **11.15** **Film: Casanova.** (2005) Romantic period drama, starring Heath Ledger, Sienna Miller and Jeremy Irons. **1.00** Sign Zone: Countryside. (R)

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Dino Dan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.50** Animals. (R) **7.00** Animals. (R) **7.05** Sooty. (R) **7.20** Digimon Fusion. (R) **7.45** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.00** Deedtime Stories. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** May the Best House Win. (R) **10.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.20** ITV News; Weather. **11.35** River Monsters. (R) **12.05** Love Your Garden. (R) **1.05** Long Lost Family. (R) **2.05** **Film:** Columbo: Lady in Waiting. (1971) Crime drama, starring Peter Falk and Leslie Nielsen. **3.50** Midsomer Murders. (R) **5.50** Tipping Point. (R) **6.45** **Regional Programme;** Weather. **7.00** **ITV News;** Weather. **7.15** **Catchphrase.** Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show, asking contestants Richie, Rachael and Craig to "say what they see" as they try to guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round, where one of them could win £50,000. (R) **8.00** **Foyle's War.** The detective's investigation into the death of a nameless Russian leads to a mysterious military facility run by Colonel Harry Galt, a respected soldier with an impeccable war record. However, as Foyle makes inquiries, he realises the deceased was a spy with dangerous connections to British Intelligence. Meanwhile, Sam does her best to help husband Adam during his by-election campaign, but can't help putting her foot in it. Crime drama, starring Michael Kitchen and Honeysookle Weeks, with Jonathan Hyde and Daniel Weyman. (R) **10.00** **ITV News;** Weather. **10.15** **Film: Ocean's Twelve.** (2004) The crooks reunite when an old enemy demands they repay the money they stole from him three years previously. Crime caper sequel, with George Clooney, Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts. **12.30** The Store. Home shopping. **2.35** Motorsport UK. Highlights from Croft. **3.25** British Superbike Championship Highlights. The latest action. **4.15** Britain's Best Bakery. Three Devon-based bakeries compete. (R) **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. The host invites guests to air their differences over family and relationship issues. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The Hoobs. (R) **6.40** The Hoobs. (R) **7.05** VW Racing Cup. **7.35** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **1.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.25** The Simpsons. (R) **2.55** The Simpsons. (R) **3.30** **Film:** Step Up. (2006) Romantic dance drama, with Channing Tatum and Jenna Dewan. **5.35** Deal or No Deal. **6.30** **Channel 4 News.** **7.00** **Tom's Fantastic Floating Home.** New series. Tom Lawton has been responsible for a host of inventions, including skate bikes, 360-degree bubble cameras, wind-powered lighting systems and recordable alarm clocks. In this programme, he is using his creative imagination to transform a derelict boat into a home filled with practical inventions for everyday life. He begins by tackling the challenges of shelter and security, coming up with an "all-seeing eye" to ward off intruders, an armadillo-inspired retractable roof and a garden that maintains itself. **8.00** **The Mill.** Esther comes of age and leaves the apprentice house, moving into a small, dirty cellar in Styl village, and her head is still spinning from her initial encounter with trainee shoemaker Will. Daniel spends more time away from home at political meetings, and his wife Susannah struggles to adjust to life away from her friends. Meanwhile, Peter returns from a speaking tour with Hannah and gets to know Miriam better, but she is horrified by the rumours that start circulating about them the next day. **9.00** **Child Genius.** The 15 remaining gifted youngsters face two more gruelling rounds, including one in which they have an hour to commit 104 randomly shuffled playing cards to memory. **10.00** **Film: The Negotiator.** (1998) A hostage negotiator accused of murder takes captives and tries to convince a colleague sent to reason with him of his innocence. Thriller, with Samuel L Jackson and Kevin Spacey. **12.40** **Film: The Insider.** (1999) **3.15** The Million Pound Drop. (R) **4.10** Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Abby's Flying Fairy School. (R) **6.25** Bubble Guppies. (R) **6.40** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.50** Chloe's Closet. (R) **7.05** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.25** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.35** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **7.40** City of Friends. (R) **7.50** Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) **7.55** Little Princesses. (R) **8.10** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.25** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **8.35** Mio Mao. (R) **8.45** Rupert Bear. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **10.00** Access. **10.05** My Child is a Monkey. (R) **11.05** Big Brother. (R) **12.05** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.05** **Film:** Big Momma's House. (2000) **2.55** **Film:** The Kid. (2000) **4.55** **Film:** Happy Feet. (2006) **6.55** **5 News Weekend.** **7.00** **Cricknet on 5.** England v India. Mark Nicholas presents highlights of the opening day of the Third Test at Ageas Bowl in Southampton, where the five match series continued. **8.00** **The Incredible Hulk Woman: Extraordinary People.** Documentary following a mother-of-three who has rare neurological condition stiff-person syndrome, which causes severe muscle spasms in the arms and legs. (R) **9.00** **Big Brother.** Daily round-up of highlights, featuring the latest tasks, games, arguments, laughs, diary room visits and bedroom chit-chat. Narrated by Marcus Bentley. **10.00** **Film: Rambo.** (2008) The one-man army travels to Burma to rescue a party of missionaries from a sadistic military officer. Action sequel, directed by and starring Sylvester Stallone. With Julie Benz. Edited to reduce end credits. **11.40** **Film: Universal Soldier: The Return.** (1999) The resurrected warrior battles against a deadly computerised opponent. Action adventure sequel, starring Jean-Claude Van Damme and Michael Jai White. Edited to remove content as advised by BBFC. **1.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** Emergency Bikers. (R) **4.00** Great Scientists. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
10.00 Family Guy **10.45** People Just Do Nothing **11.15** Family Guy **12.45** Russell Howard's Good News **1.15** People Just Do Nothing **1.45** Impractical Jokers **2.15** Slum Survivors
BBC Four
9.15 A Hundred Million Musicians: China's Classical Challenge **9.45** **Film:** In Darkness (2011) **12.00** Northern Soul: Living for the Weekend **1.00** Motown at the BBC **2.00** Lionel Richie – Dancing on the Ceiling **3.00** Prince: A Purple Reign **ITV2**
12.30 America's Got Talent **2.50** The Hot Desk: Neon Jungle **3.00** You've Been Framed! **3.55** **Film:** The Incredible Hulk (2008) **6.05** **Film:** Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) **8.00** **Film:** About a Boy (2002) **10.00** The Only Way Is Essex **10.50** **Film:** Saw II (2005) **12.40** TV OD **1.05** Fake Reaction **1.50** Funniest Ever You've Been Framed!
ITV3
11.15 Jane Eyre **1.30** A Touch of Frost **3.50** **Film:** On the Buses (1971) **5.40** Inspector Morse **8.00** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs **9.00** It'll Be Alright on the Night's Best of the Worst **10.00** **Film:** The Elephant Man (1980) **12.35** William and Mary **1.35** Wycliffe **2.30** World Kitchen **2.55** ITV3 Nightscreen
ITV4
11.00 BRDC Formula 4 Championship Highlights **12.00** The Sweeney **1.00** Tour de France Live. The La Course by Le Tour de France. **2.00** Tour de France Highlights **3.00** Tour de France Live. Stage 21 from Evry to the finish line at the Champs-Élysées in Paris. **7.00** The Car Chasers **8.00** Storage Wars Unlocked **9.00** Tour de France Highlights **10.00** **Film:** The Outlaw Josey Wales (1976) **12.50** Tour de France Highlights **1.50** River Monsters: Untold Stories **2.45** Movies Now **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **E4**
12.30 How I Met Your Mother **2.30** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.30** Suburgatory **4.00** The Mindy Project **4.30** New Girl **5.00** The 100 **6.00** Rude(ish) Tube **7.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** **Film:** X-Men (2000) **10.05** The Big Bang Theory **11.00** Virtually Famous **11.50** Rude Tube **12.55** Ben Earl: Trick Artist **Film4**
11.00 The Ladykillers (1955) **1.00** Just Wright (2010) **2.55** Five Children and It (2004) **4.50** Marley and Me (2008) **7.05** The Seeker: The Dark Is Rising (2007) **9.00** Solomon Kane (2010) **11.05** Underworld: Evolution (2006)



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MONDAY

On Hostile Ground, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A geologist tries to prevent a huge sinkhole from swallowing New Orleans as the citizens prepare for Mardi Gras. He has a tough time convincing the festival-goers of the danger that threatens them, with many doubting his judgement because he failed to predict a serious event in the past. Action adventure, starring John Corbett, Jessica Steen, Brittany Daniel and Andrew Kraulis. (2000)

TUESDAY

Look Again, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A woman survives an encounter in her home with a masked intruder, who murders her partner. The police quickly apprehend a suspect, but she believes they have arrested someone innocent. When she meets her friend's new man, she becomes convinced he is the real killer. Thriller, starring Morena Baccarin. (2011)



Infamous, Friday, BBC2, 11.05pm

WEDNESDAY

Polar Storm, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A comet collides with Earth, causing a devastating series of quakes, floods and volcanic eruptions. However, when the dust has settled, it turns out worse is to come. The impact has pushed the planet off its axis, and if a team of scientists cannot put it right, the crust will shift, wiping out all life. Disaster thriller, starring Jack Coleman and Tyler Johnston. (2009)

THURSDAY

Black Widow, Channel 5, 3.15pm

Photojournalist Melanie becomes jealous when her wealthy male friend gets engaged. But as she tries to dig up some dirt on his fiancée, she realises her love rival may actually be a murderer, who has married a series of rich men and killed them to claim the inheritance. Thriller, starring Elizabeth Berkley. (2008)

FRIDAY

Infamous, BBC2, 11.05pm

Biographical drama focusing on events surrounding Truman Capote's production of his best-selling non-fiction work In Cold Blood, based on the slaughter of a Kansas family. In his quest for fame and success, the American writer becomes transfixed by one of the two killers, and begins to struggle with drink and drug addiction. Starring Toby Jones, Sandra Bullock, Daniel Craig, Sigourney Weaver and Isabella Rossellini. (2006)

PICK OF THE WEEK

Make a note to tune in to Alan's new series

Oh look, it's just what we were all crying out for – another new TV talent show.

But before you get start getting too cynical, this new singing contest does have a twist, and we're not talking about chairs that spin round.

Thanks to a real-time interactive app, the viewing public won't have to listen to the opinions of a panel of expert judges before they are allowed to start voting, but will be able to take complete control of the show themselves.

Perhaps we should let presenter Alan Carr explain it. The Chatty Man says: "When they said it was a singing show, I thought 'No, no, no!' But when I saw this app, I thought it felt really different.

"While the singers are performing their song on the show, they're standing on a conveyor belt called The Track. If you like them, you press 'hit' if you don't you, press 'miss'. The more hits they get, they move towards the gold

zone, where they could win up to £10,000. Or, if it's all 'Misses', you could disappear backwards through the flaps to a life of misery."

He adds: "But people can't vote unless they've downloaded the app. Well, they can shout at the telly, but it's not going to make a blind bit of difference."

And according to Carr, that's not the only thing that makes The Singer Take It All stand out. For a start, unlike certain other TV talent contests we can name, it definitely won't be taking itself too seriously, or promising to turn anyone into an international superstar.

The comedian says: "We're not saying 'Ten million records.' It's got the same feel to it as when you do karaoke down the pub - there's no pressure, just come and have a go.

"And there's all of that rubbish on the talent shows of 'I don't like you... [pause]... I LOVE you! You're a dark horse.' This competition just got exciting.' Here

there isn't any of that, it's stripped bare. Nobody's cat has just died."

What The Singer Takes It All does have though is a celebrity guest who will give a bit of guidance and feedback – and Carr has some practical advice of his own for the would-be warblers. "I've been on the conveyor belt, and it's very off-putting. When it jolts when you hit a bum note and the audience decides that you're rubbish, and it starts to move, it's really tricky. I would wear flat shoes, that would be my hint."

However, he admits he's in less of a position to give pointers on vocal technique.

"I can either do really low, like Barry White, or high like the Bee Gees or Kate Bush. There's no happy medium with my voice, I'm afraid. Actually, I wanted to sing a song at the end of the show like Cilla Black did on Surprise, Surprise. Strangely, they said no."

At least the contestants are guaranteed to be heard, even if they don't stick around for long.



Alan Carr, The Singer Takes It All, Friday, Channel 4, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Blinging Up Baby

Channel 5, 9pm

Some parents can't really see the point of spending loads on money on their kids' clothing when it's only going to end up covered in food, before being outgrown in a matter of months. But others think nothing of giving their babies and toddlers designer wardrobes and crystal-covered dummies, even though, as this documentary discovers, all that bling comes at a price. Essex student and single mum Sophie May Dixon describes her daughters, four-year-old Princess Bliss Tiana May and one-year-old Precious Bell Ruby Rosina, as 'Barbie babies', but not everyone is impressed with their spray tans and frothy pink dresses – she's been criticised on social media, and her windows have been egged.

Long Lost Family
ITV, 9pm

Family man Richard Cue, 57, has always felt grateful for the love and support he received from his adoptive parents, so he wants to find his birth mother to thank her for the sacrifice she made in giving him up in 1957. Having accessed his records, however, he has been searching for almost a decade with little success. Tania Bartlett's

mother Julie fell pregnant to Iranian student Ahmed Kazem in the early 1960s, but the couple drifted apart when Julie felt unable to join Ahmed to start a new life in America. Despite intermittent contact with her father in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Tania has spent the past 30 years searching for him, not knowing if he is even alive. Davina McCall and Nicky Campbell bring these families back together.

TUESDAY

CSI: Crime Scene Investigation
Channel 5, 9pm

A seedy motel, a series of nasty but mysterious murders and a suspect who is clearly mentally ill... Are the members of Las Vegas's premier crime-solving team entering into Alfred Hitchcock territory? It sounds the outline of the plot of Psycho, doesn't it? You'll have to wait and see if the finale involves a bloke dressed up as his mother, but the case certainly leaves the team scratching its collective head. They're called to the Sky View motel after the bodies of Richard and Anne Smith are found there. They're the fourth victims in the space of three months, and the person responsible leads the team on a very grisly trail.

WEDNESDAY

This Old Thing: The Vintage Clothes Show
Channel 4, 8pm

It's the last episode of the series, so will its producers do something a little bit different with the format? Sadly, no – instead, we can expect the same sort of person involved as we've seen for the past five weeks. So meet Lucie, a London lass with seemingly thousands of items of clothing, none of which make her happy. She's got a holiday in Ibiza coming up and is determined to look like a million dollars while standing out from the crowd. She isn't a convert to vintage – yet. But you can bet that host Dawn O'Porter will have persuaded her to try on something at least 20 years old before the closing credits roll.

THURSDAY
Autopsy: The Last Hours of
Karen Carpenter
Channel 5, 9pm

In case you didn't know it, Karen Carpenter was half of

the brother-and-sister singing sensation The Carpenters. Their feelgood 1970s hits such as Goodbye to Love, Close to You and Rainy Days and Mondays helped make their fortune, and on this side of the Pond they seemed like a permanent fixture on Radio 2. However, behind the scenes, Karen's weight problems left her painfully thin. She collapsed and died 31 years ago; the cause of death was emetine cardiotoxicity – a consequence of anorexia nervosa. With the aid of her autopsy report, Dr Richard Shepherd examines the last few weeks of Karen's life and attempts to unravel what happened on the fateful morning of her death in February 1983.

FRIDAY

The Million Pound Drop
Channel 4, 8pm

This Batta-winning game show has been running, off and on, for the past four years. Plenty of celebs have graced the show since 2010, including Alan Carr, Emma Bunton, Jonathan Ross, and more recently Stephen and Christopher from Gogglebox. However, it's usually Joe Public who provide the most entertainment as they attempt to boost their coffers and change their lives. This week it's the turn of Geoff and his granddaughter Daniella, and Tom and Lowri from Swansea. Davina McCall hosts.

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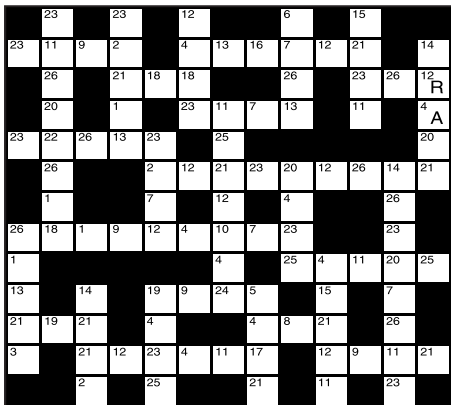
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	L	R	T	D	E	Z	K	I	P	A	C	J
G	Q	S	V	M	Y	W	O	F	X	B	U	H

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

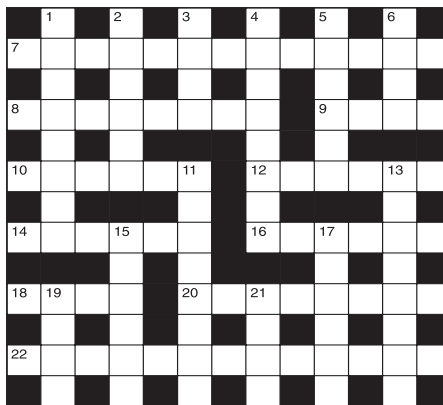
Cryptic Clues:

Across

7. Writers find it absorbing (8,5)
8. Masterful man I don't have to replace (8)
9. Off it goes to wreak destruction (4)
10. Press for identity documents? (6)
12. It's very hot when it's clear on the hill (6)
14. Dock item (6)
16. Condescends to change the design (6)
18. Cross and discourteous, we hear (4)
20. A love letter disposed to show forbearance (8)
22. It's empowered to remove unwanted growth (8,5)

Down

1. Local tea-place perhaps (8)
2. Knock everybody out (6)
3. Mail order for a city (4)
4. Shaken and upset (8)
5. A bend in the road (6)
6. Miner's union? (4)
11. Lone Royalist, perhaps (8)
13. Switched-on motorists may have it (8)
15. He may go to pot (6)
17. A way of approach that isn't welcomed? (6)
19. Lois becomes a medium (4)
21. It's not the key part of a fire-arm (4)



Quick Clues:

Across

7. Exaggeration (13)
8. Guise (8)
9. Want (4)
10. Soup dish (6)
12. Tattle (6)
14. Feverish (6)
16. Jostle (6)
18. Visage (4)
20. Absurdity (8)
22. Meditation (13)

Down

1. Proposal (8)
2. Squirm (6)
3. Stupefy (4)
4. Power (8)
5. Compensation (6)
6. Formerly (4)
11. Soubriquet (8)
13. Fantasy (8)
15. Agreement (6)
17. Scabbard (6)
19. Particle (4)
21. Invalid (4)

Sudoku

			6		3			
6	1	7				3	4	
	8			1			5	7
		2	4		7	9		
9			4	2		9	5	
	5				4			1
	2	1		9		8	6	
3			1		8			

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

8	9	3	7	1	6	4	5	2
1	7	5	8	4	2	9	6	3
4	2	6	3	5	9	1	8	7
3	5	9	4	6	1	2	7	8
6	1	7	5	2	8	3	4	9
2	4	8	9	3	7	6	1	5
7	6	1	2	8	3	5	9	4
5	8	2	6	9	4	7	3	1
9	3	4	1	7	5	8	2	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Alps; 8 Astronomer; 9 Consider; 10 Type; 12 Poncho; 14 Silver; 21 Risque; 17 Hearts; 18 Were; 19 Turn down; 19 Foot-baller; 22 Eels. Down: 2 Locomotive; 3 Saws; 4 Studio; 5 Boards; 6 Tortilla; 7 Free; 11 Pretty well; 13 Coquette; 16 Extras; 17 Hurdle; 18 Wife; 20 Dire. QUICK - Across: 1 Pith; 8 Unreadable; 9 Captives; 10 Rich; 12 Appear; 14 Legend; 15 Abject; 17 Pullet; 18 Team; 19 Ill-treat; 21 Four-footed; 22 Ewer. Down: 2 Impalpable; 3 Hunt; 4 Drover; 5 Vassal; 6 Madrigal; 7 Mesh; 11 Conveyance; 13 Evermore; 16 Tallor; 17 Pilots; 18 Tiff; 20 Rude.

Do you organise events?

Get your event listed on all the important sites and publications including The Guardian Guide, Time Out, The List and local press.

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2 days from £55

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3, 10, 17, 30 Aug, 6, 13, 20, 21 Sep
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Longleat Safari
Jungle Cruise & Bath
16, 17, 30 Aug, 20 Sep, 11 Oct
2 days from £75

Buckingham Palace
Houses of Parliament
2, 9, 16, 30 Aug, 6, 13, 27 Sep
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Settle-Carlisle Railway
Haworth
30 Aug, 20 Sep
2 days from £99.95

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29 Aug, 17 Oct
3 days from £99.95

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£79.95

BRIGHTON 2 FOR 1 BAR
17 Aug, 28 Sep 2 days
£55

LEGOLAND & LONDON
2, 30 Aug 2 days
£99.95

SOUTHPORT & WINDERMERE
17 Aug, 28 Sep 2 days
£49.95

BLACKPOOL 2 FOR 1 BAR
17 Aug 2 days
£49.95

MATLOCK LIGHTS & PEAK STEAM
27 Sep, 25 Oct 2 days
£79.95

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Japan – an ancient culture of emperors, fierce shoguns, samurais and brutal martial arts. Yet it's also a place of gentle geishas, colourful kimonos, exquisite garden design and Zen Buddhism.

The tour covers three of Japan's capitals, both past and present: Tokyo, Kyoto and Nara.

There's the chance to ride on a high speed bullet train past iconic Mt. Fuji, a trip by aerial gondola to see the Owakudani 'Boiling Valley' and the option to stay at a typical Japanese inn, bathe in a hot spring, and see the spot where the first atom bomb was detonated.

In Tokyo see its most fascinating districts, including the shopping and entertainment mecca of Ginza and the Akihabara electronic town – home to one of the first stores devoted to personal robots. Then to the north of the city there's the scenic area Nikko National Park, relatively unknown outside Japan. Surrounded by breathtaking lakes, waterfalls, forests and hot springs, a visit is made to one of the country's most extraordinary shrines - dedicated to one of it's great Shogun warriors.

Kyoto, still considered to be its cultural heart has carefully retained far more of historical Japan than any other major city. With exquisite shrines, temples, Zen gardens and traditional handicrafts, the city is an absolute treasure-trove.

Nara, Japan's first capital, dates back to the eighth century. Here, traditional culture first took root and is famous for its great Buddhist monuments including a large bronze buddha as well as time-honoured festivals.

Hiroshima is forever destined to be synonymous with the world's first use of an atomic bomb and a visit is made to the Peace Memorial Park and museum, with the shattered remains of the nearby dome marking the epicentre of the blast.

On this holiday of a lifetime prepare for wonderful service, the world's politest people and be immersed in this extraordinary culture of contrasts, where the neon lights and gadgetry of huge futuristic cities live side by side with ancient shrines and hot spas.



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- See the volcanic Owakudani 'Boiling Valley' by aerial gondola
- Tours of Tokyo, Kyoto and Nara
- Option to stay a night in a Ryokan, a traditional Japanese Inn, learn origami, traditional flower arranging or Japanese cooking
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* various according to departure dates please go to website for the latest prices and availability

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Please read brochure/web page for full information plus terms and conditions

Extremely spacious with total of six bedrooms



THE sale of this property in Wolverhampton Road, Oldbury, offers a rare opportunity to acquire an extremely spacious six bedrooomed detached residence in a popular location.

Near Warley Woods and the golf course, it is for sale through Taylors Estate Agents at £495,000.

It has a stunning portico entrance, hall, downstairs wc, spacious through lounge, sitting room, lounge/hobby room, dining room with wood effect flooring, fitted kitchen opening through to a spacious sitting area, a utility, six bedrooms (two with en-suite shower rooms), a re-fitted house bathroom with a white suite, a garage/store and pleasant well-maintained landscaped gardens including a terrace.

Contact Taylors Estate Agents on 0121 434 4345 or visit www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk



Home is described as simply stunning

MAINTAINED and improved to the highest of standards, this four bedroomed detached residence in Wolverhampton Road, Oldbury is simply stunning. It is for sale through Tom Giles & Co at £349,950.

Standing back from the road behind a block paved driveway with parking for five/six vehicles, it has a reception hall, utility room, a breakfast kitchen, cloakroom, sitting room. On the first floor is bedroom one with built-in wardrobes, a bed with fitted feature headboard and two further double wardrobes and a balcony. Bedroom two has wardrobes and a fitted headboard as does bedroom three. The beautiful bathroom includes timber decking.

Contact Tom Giles & Co on 0121 5526171 or visit www.tomgilesandco.co.uk



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<p>HALESOWEN,</p> <p>NEW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Style Detached Property EPC Rating C Lounge Dining Room Study Breakfast Kitchen Cupboard Master Bedroom With En-suite Three Further Bedrooms Family Bathroom Driveway Double Garage Front and Rear Gardens Cul-de-sac location No Upward Chain Viewing Recommended <p>£329,950 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>OLDBURY,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immaculate Detached Bungalow EPC Rating C Lounge Fitted Breakfast Kitchen Conservatory Three Bedrooms Master En-suite Family Bathroom W/c Side Garage Driveway garden To The Rear Internal Viewing Highly Recommended <p>£329,950 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>OLDBURY,</p> <p>REDUCED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended Semi Detached Property Awaiting EPC Rating E Lounge Dining Room Fitted Kitchen Downstairs Shower Room Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c Drive To Front Garden To The Rear Viewing Recommended No Upward Chain <p>£175,000 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>QUINTON,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Semi Detached Property EPC Rating D Lounge Dining Room Kitchen Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c Block Paved Drive Large Rear Garden Double Garage To The Rear Internal Viewing Recommended <p>offers over £170,000 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>OLDBURY,</p> <p>REDUCED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Bay Fronted Semi Detached Property EPC Rating D Two reception Rooms breakfast Kitchen Ground Floor W/c Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c Side Garage Drive Front and Rear Gardens Property Benefits From Gas Central Heating and Double Glazing <p>£160,000 offers over QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>QUINTON,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Semi Detached Property EPC Rating D Two Reception Rooms Kitchen Utility Area Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c Driveway Garage Front Garden Good Size Rear Garden. Property is Located On Service Road Off Stonehouse Lane <p>£150,000 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>
<p>BARTLEY GREEN,</p> <p>NEW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi Detached bungalow EPC Rating B Lounge Dining Room Conservatory Kitchen Two Bedrooms Bathroom W/c Property Benefits From Central Heating Double Glazing and Solar Panels Front and Rear Gardens Garage En-Block <p>£135,000 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>OLDBURY,</p> <p>REDUCED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid Terrace Property EPC Rating D Lounge Dining Room Kitchen Four Bedrooms Bathroom W/c Gas Central Heating System Double Glazing Front and Rear Gardens <p>£120,000 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>BARTLEY GREEN,</p> <p>NEW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi Detached Property EPC Rating C Lounge Kitchen Downstairs Shower Room Three Bedrooms Family Bathroom Driveway Garage Front and Rear Gardens Property Benefits From Having No Upward Chain <p>£110,000 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>OLDBURY,</p> <p>NO CHAIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Mid Terrace Property EPC Rating D Two Reception Rooms Kitchen Downstairs Bathroom Three Bedrooms Upstairs W/c Walled Frontage Garden To The Rear Some Original Features Internal Viewing Recommended <p>£110,000 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>OLDBURY,</p> <p>NO CHAIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Mid Terrace Property EPC Rating D Property Benefits From Double Glazing And A Gas Central Heating System Lounge Dining Room Kitchen Downstairs Bathroom Two Bedrooms Garden To The Rear Of The Property Internal Viewing Recommended <p>£97,500 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>OLDBURY,</p> <p>NEW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Terraced Property, EPC rating D Excellent Condition Throughout Two Reception Rooms Two Bedrooms And Upstairs Bathroom Viewing Highly Recommended <p>£90,000 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>
<p>OLDBURY,</p> <p>NO CHAIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grd Floor Retirement Apartment EPC Rating C Lounge Kitchen Two Bedrooms Bathroom W/c Communal Gardens Non Allocated Parking Area Only Available To Over 55's Benefits From Having No Upward Chain <p>£80,000 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>OLDBURY,</p> <p>NO CHAIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spacious Ground Floor Apartment EPC Rating D Lounge Dining Room Kitchen Two Bedrooms Bathroom W/c Property Has A Private Rear Garden and Allocated Parking Internal Viewing Recommended No Upward Chain <p>£80,000 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>WOODGATE VALLEY,</p> <p>NO CHAIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended Ground Floor Flat EPC Rating D Open Plan Living/Dining Room and Kitchen Two Bedrooms Bathroom W/c Enclosed Rear Garden Internal Viewing Recommended To Appreciate Accommodation <p>£79,950 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>QUINTON,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> End Of Terrace Property Awaiting EPC Rating Through Lounge Fitted Kitchen Playroom/Study To The Ground Floor Three Bedrooms Bathroom W/c To The First Floor Externally There Is A Drive To The Front and Garden To The Rear Marketed On A 50% SHARED OWNERSHIP Basis <p>£62,500 QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE,</p> <p>Flats 1-5, 310 Lifford Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 9RR. EPC Rating 4D 1+2. We advise that an offer has been made for the above property in the sum of £249,500. Any persons wishing to increase on this offer should notify the agents of their best offer prior to exchange of contracts. Your Move, 156 High Street, Harborne, Birmingham, B17 9PN 0121 426 2740</p> <p>QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE,</p> <p>29 Britannia Road, Rowley Regis, West Midlands, B65 9NU. EPC Rating F. We are acting in the sale of the above property and have received an offer of £69,000.00. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place. Your Move 536 Hagley Road West Quinton (0121) 421 7766</p> <p>QUINTON ☎ 0121 421 7766</p>

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Improved property has luxury accommodation



AN improved three bedroomed luxury semi-detached home in New Birmingham Road, Dudley, is for sale via Bakers at £249,950.

It has a porch, reception with storage, lounge with bay window and period style fire surround, dining room, breakfast kitchen, lobby and laundry. Bedroom one has built-in furniture and en-suite. The bathroom includes a corner bath. There is a carport, garage, garden with a pond and workshop. Contact 01384 252527 or www.bakersproperty.co.uk



This four bedroom home is tastefully decorated



A TASTEFULLY decorated four bedroomed detached home, 170 Cotwall End Road, Sedgley, is for sale through Roden Boydell at £399,950.

It has gas fired central heating, a porch, reception hall, guest cloakroom, spacious through lounge, a sitting room with open access to the dining room, a breakfast kitchen with a range of integrated appliances, a utility room, a reception room, a family room, a master bedroom en-suite, three further double bedrooms, a bathroom, a garage and impressive grounds that have been landscaped.

The lounge has a fireplace with a wood burning stove and a patio door to the rear garden.

The sitting room has an open fireplace and the dining room has a patio door.

Contact 01902 881188 or visit www.rodenboydell.com



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NEW
CRADLEY HEATH, High Haden Road£825 pcm - Fees
A recently built detached house which is ideal for walks over Haden Hill Park. This beautiful property features 4 bedrooms, 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, downstairs w.c., cloakroom, bathroom with shower. Benefits include driveway parking, rear garden. This house will not last around long. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Cherry Orchard Avenue£775 pcm - Fees
Located close to central Halesowen, and close to shops and transport links. This large unfurnished semi detached house which is at the head of a cul-de-sac features 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, downstairs WC, 4 good size bedrooms, large bathroom with separate shower, garage and driveway parking, gardens and lovely views from bedroom 2. EPC: D



ROWLEY REGIS, Fairbourne Avenue£675 pcm - Fees
Perfect for a family and close to the M5. A large Mucklow Style detached home which is available now, close to local shops and bus routes. Featuring 2 double bedrooms with fitted wardrobes and 1 large single bedroom, 2 good size lounges, large kitchen, downstairs wc, shower room, gas central heating, new windows, huge rear garden, driveway and garage. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Coombs Road£595 pcm - Fees
Deceptively large house with modern decoration. An unfurnished 3 bedroom semi detached house featuring a light and airy lounge, fitted kitchen with a dining area, 2 double bedrooms and 1 large single bedroom, white bathroom suite with 'p' shape bath, gas central heating, double glazing, driveway for 2 cars. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Bloomfield Street West£575 pcm - Fees
A stunning furnished to suit 2 double bedroom cottage style mid terraced property in close proximity to Halesowen town centre. 2 reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen/dining area with appliances, bathroom with shower, private rear garden. On road parking. Not to be missed! EPC: D



NEW
HALESOWEN, Bethesda Gardens£550 pcm - Fees
Located on this new build estate and ideal for Colley Lane Primary School. A modern ground floor apartment, featuring 2 bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite, modern bathroom with shower, fitted kitchen with white goods, open plan spacious lounge, gas central heating, double glazing, allocated parking. A must view property. EPC: C



KIDDERMINSTER, Patin House£550 pcm - Fees
A superb 1 bed 1st floor apartment set in a converted Victorian house and comprising of hall, lounge, large fitted kitchen with appliances, double bedroom, family bathroom, central heating, double glazing, allocated parking and communal gardens Available immediately. EPC: D



NETHERTON, Purlin Wharf£525 pcm - Fees
A very presentable, unfurnished ground floor apartment on this popular development, ideally located for canal walks. This property features 2 double bedrooms, master with en-suite, spacious lounge, modern fitted kitchen, family bathroom with white suite, double glazing, electric heating, 1 allocated parking space. Viewing highly recommended. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Cross Street£495 pcm - Fees
Beautifully presented and very close to Halesowen. This lovely ground floor maisonette features 1 double bedroom and a single bedroom, dining kitchen, brand new bathroom with shower, private rear garden and driveway parking for 2 cars. EPC: E



NEW
HALESOWEN, Upper Ashley Street£475 pcm - Fees
Set in this quiet residential area close to Blackheath Town Centre is this lovely semi detached home featuring lounge, fitted kitchen with gas oven/hob, 1 double bedroom, bathroom with shower, electric heating, parking, unfurnished. EPC: TBC



NEW
NETHERTON, Round Street£475 pcm - Fees
Set in a quiet road, is this lovely semi-detached home. Featuring gas central heating, 1 reception room, fitted kitchen, 1 double and 1 single bedroom, bathroom with shower, rear garden and driveway parking for 2 cars, unfurnished. Popular residential street close to Netherton High Street. 2 months deposit and a guarantor is required. (THE GUARANTOR MUST BE A HOME OWNER, FAMILY MEMBER AND WORKING). EPC: D



CRADLEY HEATH, King Street£475 pcm - Fees
Located in the heart of Old Hill. Ideally situated for local shops, buses and train links. A 1st floor modern apartment which comprises of 2 bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite, fitted kitchen, spacious lounge, double glazing, electric storage heating, bathroom with shower, allocated parking space. EPC: C



NEW
CRADLEY HEATH, Hingley Court£460 pcm - Fees
Freshly redecorated and in the centre of Old Hill. This lovely ground floor apartment features an open plan lounge/kitchen with a washer/dryer and a small fridge, 2 large double bedrooms, modern bathroom with shower, 1 allocated parking space behind electric gates. Not to be missed. Available now. EPC: TBC



DUDLEY, Gammage Street£450 pcm - Fees
Ideal for Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley Town Centre and transport links. This end terrace 2 bedroom property has been refurbished with new carpets upstairs, new Worcester combi boiler and integrated oven. This home features an entrance hall, dining room, lounge, kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, upstairs bathroom with shower, rear garden with patio area, on road parking. EPC: F



HALESOWEN, Hagley Road£450 pcm - Fees
An immaculately presented ground floor 1 bedroom flat, within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre. Featuring an open plan living room/modern fitted kitchen with integrated fridge/freezer and washing machine, bathroom with shower over bath, allocated parking space, unfurnished. EPC: G



ROWLEY REGIS, Dudley Road£450 pcm - Fees
Not to be missed is this 1 bedroom ground floor flat which has just undergone a full refurbishment. Standing in its own grounds within a detached house with parking for 2 cars this unique property comprises of lounge with electric fire, fitted kitchen, white bathroom suite with shower & 1 double bedroom, outside rear garden. EPC: G



NEW
CRADLEY HEATH, Archer Gardens£425 pcm - Fees
Set within a quiet complex, close to Cradley Heath town centre and the local train station. An unfurnished ground floor maisonette, benefiting from gas central heating, large living room with separate dining area, fitted kitchen, 2 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, communal gardens and allocated parking. EPC: G



NEW
HALESOWEN, Pippin Avenue£425 pcm - Fees
An unfurnished, modern, spacious ground floor flat on this popular estate and briefly comprising: open plan living room/ fitted kitchen, 1 double bedroom, bathroom with shower, electric storage heating, full double glazing, parking space. A minimum contract of 12 months is required. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Hamilton Avenue£425 pcm - Fees
Part furnished ground floor flat available in this popular location, gas central heating, living room/fitted kitchen with archway through to a double bedroom, shower room, allocated parking. Gas (in winter months) and water rates included in the rental. EPC: G



CRADLEY HEATH, Halesowen Road£400 pcm - Fees
This value for money unfurnished terraced house, close to Old Hill Town Centre and Old Hill Train Station. Featuring 2 bedrooms with fitted wardrobes, gas central heating, 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen with appliances, downstairs bathroom with shower, on road parking. NO REAR GARDEN. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Howley Grange Road£400 pcm - Fees
Part furnished ground floor flat available in this popular location, gas central heating, living room/fitted kitchen with archway through to a double bedroom, shower room, allocated parking. Gas (in winter months) and water rates included in the rental. EPC: G



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The Worralls, Pound Bank, Nr Bewdley

A four bedroom country property with approx 3.5 acres of gardens, two paddocks & stable, enjoying fabulous views. Reception Hall, Living Room with Inglenook & Log Burner, Sitting Room with Log Burner, L Shaped Fitted Dining Kitchen with Log Burner, Utility Room, Ground Floor Shower Room, House Bathroom, EPC E.

PRICE: £615,000



Talbot Close, Hartlebury

An impressive four bedroom detached family house with large south facing landscaped gardens at this desirable village location. Impressive Reception Hall with Guest Cloakroom, 23' 6" Lounge with Feature Fireplace, Dining Room & Study, Superb 17ft Breakfast Kitchen with Appliances, Utility Room, Four Double Bedrooms, Bathroom & 2 En-suite, Detached Double Garage, Energy Rating C.

PRICE: £399,950



Millbrook House, Neen Sollars, Nr Clebury Mortimer

Deceptively spacious detached property over 2250 sq.ft in rural village location, 4 Double Bedrooms & 2 Bathrooms, Reception Hall with Guest Cloakroom, Lounge with Brick Inglenook Fireplace, Open Plan Dining Room, Breakfast Kitchen with Fitted Appliances, Utility Room, L-Shaped Integral Garage, EPC C.

PRICE: £389,950



Brooklands, Hopton Wafers

Superior detached bungalow in a desirable village location. Spacious Lounge, Wonderful Open Plan Dining Room, 19ft Breakfast Kitchen, Utility Room, 3 Double Bedrooms, Bathroom & En-suite Shower Room, Generous Gardens Front & Rear, Double Garage & Extensive Parking, No Upwards Chain, EPC D.

PRICE: £375,000



Conference Way, Stourport

An attractive and meticulously presented larger style Redrow built detached house on this brand new development. Four Double Bedrooms, Three Bathrooms, Reception Hall, Guest Cloakroom, Spacious Lounge, Fabulous 19ft Breakfast Kitchen, Study, Utility Room, Double Garage, No Upward Chain, EPC B.

PRICE: £339,950



Copper Beech, Frith Common, Eardiston

Situated in the village of Frith Common on the North side of the Teme Valley, this modern 3 bedroom detached cottage enjoys panoramic views. Split Level Accommodation, Lounge, Dining Kitchen, Driveway & Carport Parking, Gardens Surrounding. EPC E.

PRICE: £359,950



Aranby, The Square, Stottesdon, Nr Clebury Mortimer

Large detached bungalow situated in heart of village. Superb Lounge, Open Plan Conservatory, 3 Double Bedrooms, Stylish Bathroom, 20ft Breakfast Kitchen with Aga, Open Plan Dining Room, Utility Room & Guest Cloakroom, Delightful Cottage Gardens, Large Workshop, Extensive Parking, No Upwards Chain, EPC D.

PRICE: £299,950



Severn Side South, Bewdley

Light and spacious 4/5 bedroom Grade II listed town house with wonderful views over the River Severn. Living Room, Dining Room, Kitchen with Integrated Appliances, Second Floor Bedroom (Originally Two), 3 Double Bedrooms and Spacious Bathroom, Communal Courtyard Gardens, Single Garage, EPC E.

PRICE: £299,950



Evergreen Way, Stourport

An outstanding 5 bedroom detached family house, immaculately presented throughout and situated in a popular residential location. 21ft Through Lounge, 24'6" Dining Kitchen, Utility Room, Five Double Bedrooms Two With En-suite, House Bathroom, Double Garage & Multi Parking, EPC C.

PRICE: £299,000



Parkfield Close, Hartlebury

Smartly presented 4 bedroom detached property enjoying a pleasant cul-de-sac position in this sought after village. Superb Farmhouse Style Breakfast Kitchen with Range Cooker, Spacious Lounge, Separate Dining Room, Master Bedroom, Refitted Bathroom, Side Garage, Landscaped Rear Garden, Energy Rating C.

PRICE: £255,950



Westbourne Street, Bewdley

Newly completed conversion of Grade II listed 3 bedroom property to provide spacious 3 storey accommodation presented to an excellent standard throughout. Living Room, Newly Fitted Kitchen with Full Range of Appliances, Utility Room & WC, Master Bedroom with En-suite Bathroom, Two Further Double Bedrooms, Stylish Shower Room, Good location within walking distance of the town centre and riverside, No Upward Chain.

PRICE: £179,950



Severn Mews, High Street, Stourport

Charming renovated character cottage enjoying a delightfully secluded position in the heart of the town. Lounge with Feature Fireplace and 'Burley Ambiance' Gas Fire, Neat Fitted Kitchen with Integrated Appliances, Converted Cellar Room, Two Bedrooms including Wardrobes to Master, Large and Well Appointed Contemporary Bathroom, Low Maintenance Patio Gardens, Loft access from Bed Two, No Upwards Chain, EPC E.

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Finance Example: Adam Jam 12, Cash Price £11,730. Customer deposit £2,214.32. Vauxhall deposit contribution £1,340. 23 monthly payments £99. GFV £6,310. Total amount payable £12,141.32, based on 8,000 miles per annum. 2.9% APR. Mokka 1.4 Turbo Exclusiv Cash Price £17,525. Customer Deposit £3,500 (including Vauxhall Contribution £915). Amount Financed £14,025. 35 Monthly Payments £199.24. One Payment £7,992. Amount Payable £18,465.40. Interest £940.40 APR 2.9% based on 5,000 miles per annum.

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 10 Reg Honda Civic CTDi £7295 or £35 pw	 57 Reg Skoda 1.9 TDI £4995 or £23pw	 11 Reg Astra CDTi Est £9495 or £45pw

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Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Vauxhall range (excl. Ampera): Urban: 12.7 (22.3) - 76.3 (3.7), Extra-urban: 23.9 (11.8) - 91.1 (3.1), Combined: 18.0 (15.7) - 85.6 (3.3). CO₂ emissions: 373 - 88g/km.*

On the road prices include number plates, delivery, Vehicle Excise Duty, first registration fee and VAT. Offers available on orders or registrations between 2 July and 1 October 2014 subject to availability and are available to private individuals and small businesses 1-24 (purchase only). Savings shown are against list price at time of publication, for details refer to Vauxhall's current price guide. All other sales categories are excluded; cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Offers may not apply to all retailer stocks. UK-supplied vehicles only. Vauxhall Lifetime Warranty covers lifetime ownership of first registered keeper, 100,000 mile limit. Terms and conditions apply. *Official EU-regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors.



New Scout joins the range

Fully prepared and always ready for an adventure – the latest model to join the Octavia range is a true Scout in every sense.

Building on the strengths of its acclaimed predecessors, the second-generation Skoda Octavia Scout is a unique all-rounder that combines off-road ability with exemplary on-road refinement and the brand's famous practicality.

Priced from £25,315, the new Octavia Scout features an advanced, fifth-generation Haldex clutch transmission, along with sector-best levels of interior space and a host of safety and comfort systems. Yet despite a significant increase in size and specification, the new Octavia is 20 percent cleaner and more fuel-efficient than the previous model, delivering significant running-cost savings for owners.

Two engines and transmissions are available from launch: a 2.0 TDI 150PS with a six-speed manual gearbox and a 2.0 TDI 184PS featuring a six-speed DSG as standard. The former returns 55.4mpg on the combined cycle and has CO2 emissions of 129g/km, while the range-topping model returns 55.4mpg and has CO2 emissions of 134g/km.

In addition to its off-road ability, the new Octavia Scout offers all the acclaimed safety and comfort features of the standard model. All models are available with up to nine airbags and Crew Protection Assistant for vehicle safety in crash situations and Driver fatigue sensor.

A number of electronic comfort systems are available as options. These include: Intelligent Light Assistant and Park Assist. The Scout can also be supplied with a new rear-view parking camera.

Based on the Octavia Estate, the Scout has been an integral part of the Octavia range since its introduction in 2007. Between 2007 and the end of 2013, SKODA delivered around 53,600 Octavia Scouts to customers worldwide. This represents almost eight percent of all Octavia Estates delivered during this period.

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Fuel consumption figures for the Civic 1.6i-DTEC Black Special Edition in mpg (l/100km): Urban 70.6 (4.0), Extra Urban 85.6 (3.3), Combined 78.5 (3.6). CO2 emissions: 94 g/km. Fuel consumption figures sourced from official EU-regulated laboratory test results, are provided for comparison purposes & may not reflect real-life driving experience.

Model Shown: Civic 1.6i-DTEC Black Special Edition in Crystal Black Pearl at £22,460 On The Road (OTR). Terms and Conditions: New retail Civic registered from 1 July 2014 to 30 September 2014. Subject to model and colour availability. Offers applicable at participating dealers and are at the promoter's absolute discretion. Civic Black Special Edition Honda Aspirations (PCP): Example shown based on Civic 1.6i-DTEC Black Special Edition in Crystal Black Pearl at £22,460 total cash price (and total amount payable) with 37 months 0% APR Representative (interest rate per annum 0% fixed) with £0 (0% deposit), £408.29 monthly payment, Guaranteed Future Value / Optional Final Payment of £7,761.73 annual mileage of 10,000 and excess mileage charge: 6p per mile. You do not have to pay the Final Payment if you return the car at the end of the agreement and you have paid all other amounts due, the vehicle is in good condition and has been serviced in accordance with the Honda service book and the maximum annual mileage has not been exceeded. Indemnities may be required in certain circumstances. Finance is only available to persons aged 18 or over, subject to status. All figures are correct at time of publication but may be subject to change. Credit provided by Honda Finance Europe Plc, 470 London Road, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8QY. Honda Finance Europe Plc is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Financial Services Register number 312541. The 5 Year Care Package includes: Servicing: All scheduled servicing, as detailed in the vehicles service book, will be covered for 5 years or 62,500 miles, whichever comes first. Warranty: In addition to the standard 3 year warranty the customer will receive a complimentary 2 year extended guarantee taking the warranty to 5 years or 90,000 miles, whichever comes first. Roadside Assist: In addition to the standard 3 years roadside assistance package the customer will receive complimentary HondaCare Assistance for a further 2 years, taking it to 5 years or 90,000 miles, whichever comes first. The 5 Year Care Package: The 5 Year Care Package is optional. It is being offered for £555 including VAT (usual value £1,845 including VAT, resulting in a £1,290 saving for the customer) and is available to finance or non-finance customers. Please note, should you sell the vehicle during the period of cover, the package remains with the vehicle.



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Official Fuel Consumption Figures for the Suzuki SX4 S-Cross range mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km): Urban 39.7-55.3 (7.1-5.1), Extra Urban 55.3-76.3 (5.1-3.7), Combined 47.8-67.2 (5.9-4.2), CO₂ emissions 135-110 g/km.

The above fuel consumption figures are based on an EU test for comparative purposes only and may not reflect real driving results. This offer is available from 1st July 2014 to 30th September 2014 from participating Authorised Suzuki Dealers only. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer unless otherwise stated. This offer relates to Suzuki Personal Contract Purchase (PCP Finance Deal). All prices are correct at the time of going to print. Credit is available to persons aged 18 years or over, subject to status. Indemnities may be required. Contract based on 6,000 miles per annum. For full details contact your local Suzuki Dealer. Suzuki Finance reserves the right to withdraw or amend this offer without notice or prior warning. This offer is available to customers within the UK (excludes Channel Islands & Isle of Man). Suzuki Financial Services Limited, part of Black Horse Group, Head and Registered office: St William House, Tresillian Terrace, Cardiff, CF10 5BH. ALL GRIP 4-wheel Drive option available on 1.6 petrol S25 and DDIS S2-T & S25 models. Model shown: SX4 S-Cross 1.6 S25 available from £19,749.



Venga just one of Kia's models to up its game

By Sharon Walters



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MPG figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Pictures for illustration only. We are licensed credit brokers. 7 year / 100,000 mile manufacturer's warranty, for terms and exclusions visit www.kia.co.uk. For Motability details and eligibility visit: www.motability.co.uk

Picanto: Model shown is the Kia Picanto 5-door 'VR7' 1.0 68bhp 5-speed manual @ £9,095 including £750 customer saving. Customer savings vary by model derivative. Specification is subject to change without notice. We can introduce you to a limited number of carefully selected finance providers. We may receive a commission from them for the introduction. Price, Reevo score and number of reviews correct at time of going to press. †3 years' servicing (Kia Care-3) for £99 offer is only valid on applicable 'VR7' models. Log onto kia.co.uk/vr7 for full details. Offer not available with any other offer. Retail sales only. Subject to availability on vehicles registered between 01/07/2014 and 30/09/2014. Finance subject to status. Terms and conditions apply. 18's or over. Guarantee/indemnity may be required. Further charges may be made subject to the condition or mileage of the vehicle. Anticipated annual mileage 9,000 miles, excess mileage charge 14.9p per mile. YOU WILL NOT OWN THE VEHICLE UNTIL ALL PAYMENTS ARE MADE. At the end of the agreement there are 3 options: (i) Renew: Part exchange the vehicle, where equity is available. (ii) Retain: Pay the Optional Final Payment (£4,246) to own the vehicle or (iii) Return the vehicle. Kia Motors Finance RH1 1SR. The Bluetooth® word mark and logo are registered trademarks and owned by the Bluetooth SIG, Inc.

Kia's good-looking and roomy supermini MPV isn't quite there yet in terms of cabin quality but it isn't far off. Aspects of the interior feel really classy and the folding rear seats work well.

The 1.4-litre CRDi diesel isn't the Venga's best unit but it delivers 63mpg economy with the aid of a standard stop/start system.

As car buyers we like our preconceptions. Without them how could we possibly make sense of the monumental range of choice we're faced with?

There are just too many cars out there and it's really useful if we can dismiss some of them out of hand based on what we think we know about the companies that make them. Now get ready for the bad news, if you don't occasionally revise these prejudices towards certain makes or models, you might end up missing out in a big way. For example and like it or not, anybody looking for a small family car with a diesel engine should at least consider the Kia Venga 1.4 CRDi.

If you're thinking that Kia makes basic, cheap cars that fall below the quality standards set but the big name brands, you've just proven the point about revising those preconceptions from time to time. Much to the consternation of Ford, Vauxhall, Volkswagen, Renault and the other companies that UK car buyers gravitate towards by default, Kia has been on the up.

We've seen a concerted effort by the Korean firm to up its game and compete on an equal footing with the big players.

The Venga is a supermini MPV and prime evidence of the progress that has been made. It's built in Europe to European quality standards and designed to European tastes for sale on the European market. As Europeans and with Kia having gone to all this trouble, we really should give it a chance.

It's the diesel Venga we're concerned with here, a model that will be crucial to the car's success in its intended European heartland. The engine is a 1.4-litre CRDi common-rail injection unit with 89bhp at 4,000rpm and 163Nm of torque between 1,750 and 2,750rpm.

Acceleration from 0-62mph takes 14seconds which is far from lively but the engine gives up its power in a smooth manner with good flexibility. It's not the most refined unit, filling the cabin with booming sound when pushed hard and coming over a little coarse on part throttle.

The actual handling of the Venga is worthy of praise with the well-weighted steering provoking crisp responses.

Roundabouts

Don't expect anything too dynamic because this is a taller vehicle than a conventional supermini and its height is felt in corners through a bit of body roll. The chunky steering wheel feels good in the hands and the upright driving position affords good visibility, although the A-pillars do obstruct your view on roundabouts. The ride is comfortable, the suspension taking bumps in its stride, and the Venga generally feels very at home in the urban streets where most owners will use it.

The cabin is what it's all about here and the Venga is certainly roomy with plenty of legroom and a boot of 440-litres. Kia has put particular thought into how owners will accommodate their luggage and the boot area can be extended to 570 litres by sliding the rear seat forward or through the two-tier boot floor, even before you get involved in folding the rear seats down. When you are forced to employ Kia's Fold & Dive seating system, which operates with a reassuring solidity, the 60:40 split rear seats drop to create a flat load floor with a 1,552mm load length and a 1,253 litre capacity.

Kia's quest to enhance the quality of its products has been a successful one and the parts of the Venga that you look at and touch most regularly appear to be a match for the sector's finest.

The design is uncomplicated and there are nice details like the tactile metallic bezels on the main dials and the crisp illumination of the instruments.

Before it began clambering up market, Kia was known for low prices and lots of equipment. You still get a fair bit of kit for your money in the Venga but the prices reflect Kia's desire for parity with mainstream rivals. The trim levels are handily dubbed 1, 2 and 3. The entry-level one featuring basics like electric windows, a CD stereo, the Fold & Dive seating system and a centre armrest. The car comes in a single five-door bodystyle with six-speed gearboxes for the diesel models featured here.

The diesel Vengas come with the EcoDynamics badge on their tailgates which refers to the presence of Kia's EcoDynamics fuel saving technology. The highlight of this is the ISG stop-start system which turns off the engine when the car is stationary and restarts it automatically when it's time to move off. The Venga also has gear-shift indicator lights and low rolling resistance tyres on versions with 15" or 16" wheels. The 1.4 CRDi diesel returns close to 63mpg on the combined cycle with emissions of 117g/km. This doesn't make it the cleanest car in the sector but it comes close.

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1

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2

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AVANTGARDE 400RL
52 plate. 12 months MoT.

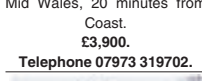
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3

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6 Property

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7 Jobs

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8 Motoring

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MAZDA 3 TS2, 2006, 55 reg, tax, MoT, 24,000 miles, abs, a/w, e/m, air con, pas, £2,900.
07977 580367.

NISSAN NOTE ASENTA 1.4, 08, 80k miles, blue, alloys, 6 months tax, full MoT, good condition. £3,500 ono. 07984 228031.

PEUGEOT 207 1.4 petrol, 5 door hatchback, black, 27,000 miles, full MoT, excellent condition, £1,995. 07932 963381.

PRESTIGE

MERCEDES CLS 350 GRAND EDITION
2010, 3 Litre Turbo Diesel. Silver With Black Leather. 68,000 Miles.
Auto, Climate Control, Sat Nav And All Usual Refinements.
Taxed and MoT.
£14,500 ono.
Telephone 01630 639523 or 07732 879456.

PRESTIGE

PEUGEOT 307 CONVERTIBLE 2.0, 2004, leather interior, almost fish, £380 o.n.o. 01912 437007.

RENAULT CLIO DYNAMIQUE, 2005, 50,400 miles, Tempest blue, air con, fish, MoT, one owner, tax, £1,750 ono. 07912 305688.

RENAULT MEGANE SCENIC F101 1600cc, 02, 67k miles, F1 engineered, long tax and test with guarantee, £2,000 o.n.o. 01902 775075.

TOYOTA YARIS TR, 2008, petrol, 56,000 miles, metallic grey, fish, long MoT, one owner, tax, £4,300 ono. 01902 771632.

VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6 2005, Silver met, AC, CL, low mileage, full MoT and tax, £1,900 ono. 01902 755075.

VAUXHALL CORSA SRI 1.6, black, 2010, 5dr, 46,000 miles, full MoT, 6 months tax, £6,000 o.n.o. 07989 318567.

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.0, 3dr, black, 56 reg new shape, 85,000 miles, MoT and tax, drives like new, £2,525. 07980 113660.

VAUXHALL CORSA Club, 1.4 Automatic, blue, 58 reg, 32,400 miles, full MoT, £4,500. 01902 567630.

VAUXHALL CORSA Energy 1.3CDTi, Ecoflex, 2010, 29K miles, metallic silver, 5dr, tax, MoT, AC, EW, alloys, £5,000. 01902 850173.

VAUXHALL MERIVA EXCLUSIV 1.4
16v, 2011, 20,500 miles, dark grey, long MoT. Well priced for quick sale. Very good condition, illness forces sale.
£6,100 ono.
07836 734360.

VOLVO S80
2005, I have owned this car from new and it has been extremely reliable.
£2,000.
Haughton near Stafford.
07785 104698.

VW BORA 1.9 TDI, 03, excellent condition, FSH, 12 months MoT, tax, 78k, good MoT, CL, EW, AC, any trial, £1,900. 07812 907859.

VW POLO 1.2, 2006, 3dr, MoT January 2015, 108,000 miles, built in hands free kit, ideal first car, £1,800. 07708 030163.

VW POLO 1.2 Manual, 2005, 3dr, red, 66,000 miles, MoT January 2015, very good condition, reliable, £1,775 ono. 07807 494097.

cars under £1500

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

BMW 520iSE R reg., MoT early Dec, 98k, Auto, excellent condition for year, £550. 01902 677102.

CITY ROVER 03 reg., 1.4, 45,810 miles, full MoT, good runner, £425 ono. 07719 923101.

FIAT PUNTO DYNAMIC 1.2L
05 reg, turquoise, 12 months MoT, 3 months tax, 4 new tyres, good condition.
£1,095.
07580 501183.

FORD FIESTA FREESTYLE Y reg., 1.25 Zetec, 4dr, only 29,000 miles, FSH, tax, MoT, stunning, indistinguishable from new condition inside and out, steel blue.
£1,250
07455 595966.

FORD FOCUS 1.6 Ghia, 02 reg, 88,000 miles, tax end Aug, MoT Nov, excellent condition, £1,295. 07807 001994 / 01902 70621.

FORD KA 2 V reg., in blue, 34,000 miles, 1 former keeper, 12 months MoT, 8 months tax, excellent condition, £695. 07804 831294.

FORD KA 52 reg, 03, black, MoT, tax, new exhaust/tyres and brakes, 65,000 miles, good condition, £795. Please call 07728 96052.

GOLF GTI T, 51 reg, 12 months MoT, immaculate condition, black, £1,450. o.n.o. 07804 563445.

HYUNDAI AMICA 1.0, 2002, silver, MoT to March 2015, 41,000 miles, good condition, ideal first car, £699 o.n.o. 07538 537321.

LOOK

VAUXHALL MERIVA
2004, 80,000 miles, silver, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, air con, 11 months MoT, metallic paint, central locking, pas, 6 months tax, CD.
£13,500 ono.
01902 887215.

VAUXHALL VECTRA 1.8, 2004, full MoT, 6 months Tax, four new tyres, nice condition, very clean, £1,100. 07757 76429 / 01902 440429.

VW POLO 1600SE ESTATE, 02 reg, 63,000 miles, tax, long MoT, as new, buy back guarantee, £1,300 ono. 01952 500878.

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Any age. any condition.
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01630 562993.

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commercial vehicles

PEUGEOT PARTNER 600 van, 2001, 76,000 miles, 12 months MoT, £1,150. 01922 495631 or 07768 841443.

MAZDA MX5 SPORTS 1.6, J reg., low mileage, 11 months MoT, new hood (cost £350), reluctant sale, £750 o.n.o. 07980 430350.

MGF Very good condition, red, leather seats, 33,000 miles, loads of history, genuine reason for sale, £1,450 ono. Call 07773 437007.

NISSAN ALMERA 03, 1.5, 7 months tax, 8 months MoT, great condition, must be seen, genuine inquiries only, £1,195. ono 01384 443251.

NISSAN MICRA 2-dr, 1999, 12 months MoT, 72k miles, recent tyres, all round very good condition, £380 o.n.o. 01902 755075.

PEUGEOT 106 XR 1.4, R reg, 79k, new MoT, two owners, Red, smart, useful cheap car, £450 ono. George 01869 582030 Rugby.

PEUGEOT 107 12 months MoT, 55 reg, £20 tax, good learner car, £1,250 ono. 01384 559677.

PEUGEOT 206 2000, Roland Garros, 5-dr, full glass roof, leather seats, EW, EM, CL, 69k, alloys, MoT, 32,400 miles, £2,450.

PEUGEOT 406, 2004, 44,000 miles, silver/blue, electric windows, MoT, CD, leather interior, £1,400 ono. 07751 046777.

PEUGEOT 406 EXECUTIVE
1997, MoT'd till January.
Taxed till April.
Full Executive specification.
120,000 miles.
£495 ono.
01902 342812.

RENAULT MEGANE Estate, 04 5dr, beige, all elec, pas, 6 months tax, full MoT, Good condition, £1,250. 07405 518170. 0121 572 2170.

ROVER 100 KENSINGTON, 1996, 44,000 miles, Tax & MoT till Oct. Good runner, £250. 0121 556 4403.

ROVER 214SEI 1995, nightfire red, s/roof, alloys, leather, low miles, 12 months MoT, excellent, £550 ono. 01902 790879 / 07768 642621.

ROVER 25 1.4, 02 reg, only 31,000 miles, Tax and MoT. Immaculate. £950. 07751 552369.

ROVER 450 Connoisseur Turbo Diesel, 2005, 19,000 miles, MoT, 7 months Tax, £825 ono.
07791 531018. Stourbridge.

SMART CAR, convertible, limited edition Ladybird, 77k, reconditioned engine, full MoT, 3 months tax, £1,300 ono. 07986 221279.

TOYOTA COROLLA, 2001, 5dr, hatchback, silver, very good condition, taxed, MoT. £850. 01902 682471.

VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.4, 5 door, 88k, red, pas, tax, 12 months MoT, s/h, 2 former keepers, 1997, £550. Telephone 07876 300302.

MG ROVER ZS
Here we have a lovely Rover 400 ZS, 2002, 97,000 miles, silver, all electrics, service history, part leather interior, MoT and tax, drives well.
£695 ono.
07769 321934.

MGF SPORT 1999, 11 months MoT, tax end Sept, no overheating problems, very fast, £725 ono. 01384 626389.

NISSAN ALMERA 03, 1.5, 7 months tax, 8 months MoT, great condition, must be seen, genuine inquiries only, £1,195. ono 01384 443251.

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VW POLO 1600SE ESTATE, 02 reg, 63,000 miles, tax, long MoT, as new, buy back guarantee, £1,300 ono. 01952 500878.

RENAULT KANGOO 1.5 diesel van, white, 87,000 miles, 12 months MoT, very clean, reliable, stereo, £900 o.n.o. 07811 706250.

RENAULT KANGOO VAN, 54 reg, white, good condition, MoT, tax, £850 ono.
Telephone 01902 744409.

motorbikes

APRILIA PEGASO STRADA 660cc, 2006, 1821 miles, mint, the following also as new LEWIS motor cycle suite, black / grey, £75.
Storma boots, size 8, £25.
Swift leather gloves £20.
Paddock stand, rear, £20.
Plus extras
Price for bike £3100
0121 559 1118.

TRIUMPH BONEVILLE SE, 865cc, 2011, phantom black, tax, 2,173 miles, £4,600. 01384 877423.

TRIUMPH SPRINT RS, 955 cc, 1 & 1, new tyres, 2000, service holders handbook, 2 keys, 41k, excellent cond, £1,500 ono. 01384 250253.

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VFR 800
2001, only 12,451 miles.
Fantastic bike,
with a unique paint job.
Full history, loads of extra stuff.
Tax to August 2014 and
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It's ready to go!
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9 Local Information

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10
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seeking a kind and sincere gentleman, must love animals, any nationality welcome.

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WLTm a similar slim lady in her 50's, also looking for a long term relationship.
Genuine replies only.
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GENUINE MALE 65 FROM WOLVERHAMPTON
6ft11, owns house and car, looking for lady 60-65 from Wton area for Friendship.
Photo attached.
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SINCERE DIVORCED MALE 56
Non smoker with GSOH. Seeks new adventures with a warm, affectionate, sensual lady between 40-50 for hopefully a long lasting relationship.
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WHITE MALE, 52
nice looking, tall, caring, own house, job, looking for sincere, loving woman, 37 - 53, to share rest of life with.
Children welcome, photo appreciated (not used).
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WIDOWER 60's
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National Level One coaches. CRB checked.
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Tony on 07943 196140 or 07948 700436.

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Contact Richard on 07768 005737.

WOMBOURNE WARRIORS
Require players for the upcoming season.
Under 17's.
In the Bilston Premier League, Please Call Wayne on 07982 723596.

general

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

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DEBS petite attractive auburn haired, good listener, romantic, enjoys socialising, cosy nights in with Mr Right, seeking similar caring N/S single dad. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412387

CHRISTINA curvy beauty, 27yrs, own home, very very adventurous seeks no strings fun and frolics. Can accommodate and will answer all calls. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box No: 410127

JAN slim curvy professional warm, affectionate, looking to fill full time vacancy with similar male who loves cuddles/kisses and bikes for romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412167

SAM, 35yrs, own business, sexy, loves dressing up and married, seeks discreet man for casual meetings. Can travel anywhere. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1949 Box No: 408297

KAREN pretty blonde, short in stature, big personality, keeps fit, loves dogs, seeking honest caring male who can make me laugh. Nothing too serious just fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412377

JEAN petite female who enjoys golf, days out, cosy evenings in, holidays, WLTM older male in his 60's with a good personality and big heart. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412359

SUSIE, married, adventurous/dominant lady, 38yrs, seeks discreet man any area for no strings fun. Tel: 0905 002 1945 Box No: 412285

JULIE really fun loving slim pretty female 38 looking for nice guy to go out with, get to know and hopefully enjoy a relationship with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411517

RITA attractive blonde with a very kind heart seeks special man to share my life with. Please get in touch if like me you are fed up with always being the single friend. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412987

JAN 5ftins slim pretty lady in great shape, open minded laidback, GSOH, OHAC, many interests, WLTM someone for cuddling up with and to share good and bad times. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412931

MAUREEN, discreet sensual lady, 42yrs seeks daytime fun at her home. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box No: 405297

ANN slim attractive N/S lady who is easy to get along with, looking for romantic interesting man for new adventures together, hopefully ltr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412911

JULIE loving, caring, honest, seeks real gent to share conversation and have a great time, friendship/relationship, who knows? Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412777

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. Tel No: 0905 002 1956 Box No: 366019

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KAREN slim, tall, attractive 36yr old normal female who likes shopping, socialising, nights in/out seeking thoughtful genuine male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412041

KIM 25yrs feminine, pretty, big blue eyes, GSOH, varied interests, likes romantic beach walks, cosy nights in, seeking honest loving man for ltr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411777

CAROL young 47, caring, loyal, likes music, concerts, cinema, theatre, seeks male with similar interests for fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411919

PROFESSIONAL black lady, likes cooking, music, countryside, seeking honest, holidays and nights out for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411763

VICKY 37yr professional, mum to one, sensual and very attractive, looking for a real man, tall, fit, sincere and passionate to enjoy each other's company. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411695

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SARA bored blonde looking for single gents for fun, chats and meets, looking forward to hearing from you, don't be shy. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412055

EMMA petite young looking 31yr slim attractive single brunette, loves walking, talking, music, seeks honest romantic 30-40yrs. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412037

ANNABELL 29 slim sophisticated well travelled interesting sensual fit brunette with lots to offer seeks older male to appreciate and treat me well. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412177

Men seeking women

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TONY young looking 50, 5ft 8ins, slim, seeks slim nice chick, trendy for dates and LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413049

NORTH Shropshire male, 67, N/S, solvent, GSOH, likes walks, travel, music, holidays, countryside, seeks N/S lady for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412867

MAURICE gentleman, 59, gentle, kind, caring, loving, generous, seeks lady with GSOH and similar personality, slim-medium build. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412859

TALL attractive Shropshire male, 54, seeks attractive female for fun and excitement in the daytime. Discretion assured. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411823

JOHN 5ft 10ins, slim, GSOH, various interests, seeks female for friendship/relationship, 35-52. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413107

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STEPHEN 58, good looking, likes art, travel, seeking female, 50 plus for companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412633

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FIT bubbly male, athletic, blue eyes, short fair hair, easy going, loving, GSOH, seeking female for no strings fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411901

TIGER Woods lookalike, seeking pretty BBW for good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411801

IAN 65, romantic, likes to wine/dine, days out, seeking younger female for relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412087

MARK fun loving, easy going, fair hair blue eyes, athletic, tanned, looking for good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411989

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First team drop only one shot in victory

Warwick & Worcester Premier Division 1 West Brom FSC 176 The George 251

THE first team put up a terrific performance dropping only one shot in a 75 shot win away at West Brom FSC.

The first four set the standard with wins by Jamie Dunn (21-8), Pete Davenport (21-12), Elliot McGuinness (21-13) and Mark Street (21-15) giving The George a 36 shot lead. The pressure was kept on by the middle four who increased the lead to 47 shots with Mick McGuinness (21-14), Shane Day (21-18) & Phil Clinton (21-19) all winning. The back four of Marc Wilson (21-7), Steve Dicken (21-14), Ivan Smout (21-16) and Steve Darling (21-19) completed the rout.

South Staffs Premier Division The George 242 Nordley B 167

The second team had an important home win against fellow relegation candidates Nordley B. The best of the nine George winners were Darren Wood (21-1), Stewart Meddings (21-8) & Bill Chiswell (21-9).

Warwick & Worcester Alliance Division 2 The Maggies v The George 3rd
Match abandoned.

Swimmers finish with sixth spot

HALESOWEN swimmers travelled to Nuneaton for the A final of the Mercian Summer League.

It became clear early on that the team was going to struggle and spent most of the gala between fifth and sixth place.

Despite individual efforts the swimmers had to settle for a creditable sixth place overall in the league.

Individual wins were elusive with stars of the show Oliver Bradley-Wood grabbing a win in the freestyle and Robert Jennings in the butterfly.

Final point scores were: City of Coventry, 233, Leamington Spa 218, Stratford Sharks 192, Worcester 146, Kingsbury Aquarius 127, Halesowen 126.

Jess hopes to varnish over Olympics

CYCLE star Jess Varnish goes into the Games feeling strong in both mind and body.

The Halesowen star is refreshed and re-energised but admits nothing will erase her London 2012 disappointment.

Varnish, 23, saw her dream of Olympic success on home turf end in cruel fashion when she and Victoria Pendleton were relegated from the team sprint in the semi-finals.

The pair, who had broken the world record in the qualifying stages, were penalised for a marginal error on the changeover and

Cycling

denied the chance to go for gold.

While Pendleton had two further chances at glory – winning keirin gold and individual sprint silver in her final Games before retirement – Varnish had lost her only chance of success.

Now, two years down the line, she is hoping for better luck in the women's sprint at Glasgow's Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome.

If the narrative of righting previous wrongs is a tempting one, Varnish is keen

to avoid it, insisting London 2012 will always hurt but not let it define her efforts in other major events.

"London was obviously a massive, massive disappointment. I don't think I'll ever get over that," said Varnish, who will ride for Team England at the Commonwealths.

"I don't actually think winning in Glasgow would do that for me. It would be a massive achievement and I would be very, very proud. But I think I will always have that disappointment.

"I don't think it will ever go away to be honest, until I retire maybe.

Justice

"But I have to use it to my advantage more than anything. I can't be a 'woe is me' thing, it's got to be about what I'm going to do after that.

"The Commonwealth Games is a big deal for me and I just want to go there in good shape and do myself justice."

Varnish's chances of success have been lifted by the absence through injury of friend and rival Becky James.

The pair won bronze in the team sprint in the World Championships Colombia in February.

Yeltz see the lead snatched away

Halesowen Town 2 Stafford Rangers 2

HALESOWEN established a two goal lead but were pegged back by two late goals as Stafford earned a draw in an entertaining pre-season friendly.

Ben Haseley opened the scoring after 21 minutes by out-muscling Williams to a long ball before slotting past former Brocton keeper Whitehouse.

Whitehouse then raced out of goal to clear from Haseley four minutes later.

Stafford enjoyed another good spell before the interval as Dacres headed on to the crossbar before Dan Cope missed a great chance by putting a 37th minute free header wide from Ryan Wynter's cross.

Just before the interval Joel Kettle's back header fell wide from a Tom Tonks' long throw in.

Robert Thompson-Brown was rewarded in the 81st minute when he skipped past three defenders to double the lead.

But with the game seemingly settled, Stafford snatched two quick-fire goals. Cope nipped in to head home. Then Dacres poked home the equaliser.

Friends will line up as rivals for games

THEY have been the best of friends but now they will be the best of enemies.

Kristian Thomas will face his pals as the Team England and Team Scotland rivalry heats up at Lilleshall.

The Wolverhampton Olympic bronze medallist will lead Team England's gymnasts – favourites for gold – at the Commonwealth Games.

They will face those who know them inside out, with Team Scotland ready to cash in on their inside knowledge.

Both squads train and compete together in the British Gymnastics set-up but will be on opposite sides this month.

They are training at Lilleshall and will even travel to Glasgow together before going head-to-head at the SECC Precinct in the second week of the Games.

It will be alien to most of the squad but Thomas is prepared for the stakes to be raised even before they leave.

"The training camp is at Lilleshall and we're going up almost as one team," said the Wednesfield star. "It's strange because once we get up there they'll be on one side of the village and we'll be on the other.

"Our training times will be different, everything changes. It'll be weird having the training camp here – all of us together – and for them to then step away in the village.

"As we get closer it'll heat up, we'll be ribbing each other. We'll have Team England and Team Scotland on the pommel at the same time and maybe have little

Gymnastics

competitions. We might even be putting each other off to fall off the apparatus – little things like that. If I was sharing with one of them I'd be putting something in the bed sheets or stealing their shower gel.

"It should be quite fun. The Commonwealths isn't as important as the Worlds or Europeans, so we can have a bit of fun and make the most of it."

Thomas, who trained in Halesowen has lived and competed with Scotland's Dan Keatings, Frank Baines and Dan Purvis in senior competition, with Purvis a member of Team GB's London 2012 bronze medal winning squad.

They are a tight-knit group, watching them play football in the gym during their lunch break testifies to that. But Thomas admits training with one of the contenders for the podium has transformed their sessions.

"Straight away we're in the competition mindset. The competition rivalry starts it off so it's about dealing with the added bit of pressure," said the 25-year-old.



Kristian Thomas finalises his preparations at the National Sports Centre, Lilleshall

Tonev and Luna miss out on tour

ALEKSANDAR Tonev and Antonio Luna are on the verge of leaving Villa after being left out of the squad for the tour of the US.

Villa boss Paul Lambert has decided to leave the duo out of the travelling party for the trip to Texas as he looks to move last summer's signings out.

Left-back Luna is being strongly linked with a move to Italian side Verona having fallen down the pecking order at Villa Park, with Kieran Richardson, Enda Stevens and Joe Bennett set to battle it out for the full-back berth.

Tonev also looks to be on his way out of the club after failing to impress following his move from Lech Poznan last summer.

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shine at games
Page 39

Games begin
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Page 39



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Foster is to stay on at the Baggies

ALBION goalkeeper Ben Foster is ready to end his career at The Hawthorns after committing himself to the club for another five years.

The 31-year-old has signed a new four-year deal with a year's option in the Baggies' favour, effectively tying himself to the club until 2019.

That will take the England international past his 36th birthday and he is already eyeing the chance to see out his playing days with Albion, who he joined from Birmingham in 2011.

"When I signed here permanently, I said this is the sort of club I could see myself finishing my career at," said Foster, who played for England against Costa Rica at the World Cup in Brazil.

"And that's exactly how I felt when the club said they wanted to negotiate a new contract. It was something I wanted to get sorted as soon as possible. I'm very happy here.

"It was a very obvious and easy decision for me and my family."

Head coach Alan Irvine added: "Ben is one of the best keepers in the country, which he showed when he played really well for England against Costa Rica.

"Ben is extremely professional, which is infectious in training."

Gamboa aims to make mark

ALBION transfer target Cristian Gamboa says he is ready to make his mark in one of Europe's top leagues.

The Baggies, who were expected to confirm the loan signing of Liverpool defender Andre Wisdom this week, are also in talks with Norwegian side Rosenborg over a £2m deal for Costa Rica right-back Gamboa.

And the 24-year-old says he is ready to try his luck in the Premier League.

"After the World Cup, I'm ready for the next step, to go to a better league," said Gamboa, who figured in all of his country's games at Brazil 2014. "I respect Rosenborg, I am grateful to everyone who helped me here, but right now a transition to a better league is the best for the family and my career."

"I really hope it will go in order in a matter of days," he added.

Baggies friendly in USA was no funfair

Sacramento Republic 0 Albion 1

ALAN IRVINE admitted Albion endured a rollercoaster evening in the battling 1-0 friendly win over Sacramento Republic.

The Californian State Fair, currently in full flow next to Bonney Field, home of the American side, provided a bizarre and colourful atmosphere to proceedings.

And as children screamed with delight on the waltzers, the handful of Baggies fans inside the 8,000 seater stadium were given a rough ride of their own.

The Baggies took the lead in California through Graham Dorrans' 13th-minute

Football

penalty and had chances to extend their lead.

But as Irvine's men began to tire in only their third pre-season outing, the USL Pro League team got on top and it took a string of fine Boaz Myhill saves to deny them a draw.

A big plus point for head coach Irvine was that eight of his players got a full 90 minutes under their belts.

"It was always going to be a tough test

because they're right in the middle of their season," said Irvine.

"Sacramento have played a lot of games and are obviously at their peak.

"The heat at the start of the game was also a problem.

"What did I expect out of it? When I spoke to the players before the game, it was again about getting some more fitness, and them playing 90 minutes, which a number of them did. For some of them, that was a big step up because they've only played 45 minutes so far."

"For example, Sebastien Pocognoli said

to me afterwards that it's the first full game he's played for four months, which was obviously a big test for him.

"In fact, for most of the boys, that will have been their first full game for several months."

Albion finished the game with 10 men after Craig Gardner was shown a second yellow card eight minutes from time.

"I felt it was poor to send Craig off - it wasn't a good decision," reflected Irvine, who will bring Albion back to play the Republic a second time at Bonney Field on Saturday morning.

Be patient Anichebe tells fans

VICTOR ANICHEBE says Albion fans should forget about Brown Ideye's £10m price tag.

The Nigeria striker signed to the Baggies from Dynamo Kiev for a club-record fee on Friday.

However, his fellow countryman Anichebe has pleaded for fans to be patient with the hitman.

Anichebe, a close friend of Ideye since their days in the youth set-up with the Super Eagles, said: "I don't think the fans should expect too much, too soon from him.

"They should forget about the price tag. The club pays what they want to pay for players. That's not down to the player.

"I know he's a really good player but the fans need to give him time to adapt, just as it's taken me time to adapt."

He added: "We can play together, or he may play instead of me or vice versa. The main thing is that we're a team and hopefully we'll bring in more new faces.

"On a personal note, I'm really happy for him.

"He will need time to settle in but if the fans remain patient, I'm sure he will do well."

Hitman spot for Edwards

WOLVES midfielder Dave Edwards has been given a licence to thrill after being told he will only play in an advanced role from now on.

The Wales international has previously been used in midfield positions.

However, Kenny Jackett believes Edwards can be a real goal-threat in the Championship.

The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford, Thursday, July 24

YELTZ SEE LEAD SNATCHED AWAY

Halesowen Town 2 Stafford Rangers 2

TWO late goals earned Stafford a draw at higher league Halesowen in an entertaining pre-season friendly.

Stafford started brightly with Christian Dacres and James Dance going close but it was down to the Yeltz side to open the tally.

For Halesowen, Ben Haseley set new signing Peter Till free but Michael Williams covered well and Till's powerful 15th minute free-kick was tipped away by visiting goalkeeper Adam Whitehouse.

Halesowen's Haseley opened the scoring after 21 minutes by out-muscling Williams before slotting past Whitehouse.

The visitors enjoyed another good spell before the interval as Dacres headed on to the crossbar before Dan Cope put a 37th minute free header wide from Ryan Wynter's cross.

Blocked

Early in the second half Whitehouse denied Haseley on the turn.

Lively Yeltz substitute Robert Thompson-Brown was then unlucky to see his superb 72nd minute shot strike the crossbar from an Aaron Griffiths cross with Chris Lait's effort blocked from the rebound.

Griffiths then brought another great save from Whitehouse in the 80th minute.

But Thompson-Brown was rewarded in the 81st minute when he skipped past three defenders and powered a tremendous 20-yard drive beyond Whitehouse to make it 2-0.

Football

Lait's 86th minute drive then fell just wide and Cope fired inches wide at the other end.

With the game seemingly settled in Halesowen's favour, Stafford struck twice in the dying minutes.

Cope nipped in before home goalkeeper Matt Sargeant to head home from a ball straight down the middle in the 89th minute and in the third minute of added time Dacres poked home Stafford's equaliser from close range.

Halesowen Town: Sargeant; Kettle (Bowen HT), Charlton (Oliver 69), Forde (MacKenzie HT), Hull (c), Tilt, Turner, Tonks (Lait HT), Christie (Thompson-Brown 64), Haseley (Danks 64), Till (Griffiths 69).

Stafford Rangers: Whitehouse; Williams, Branch, Daniel (Spittle HT), Ballinger, Palmer (Vaughan 65), Dance (Reid 65), Dacres, Wynter (Edwards 51), Cope, Curtis (Edmunds HT). Unused Subs: Finch, Downs, Smith, Westray, Berkley, Greaves.

Attendance: 229

Wisdom is ready for Premiership, says Moore



Andre Wisdom signs for West Bromwich Albion from Liverpool for a season loan

ALBION favourite Darren Moore says new-boy Andre Wisdom is ready for the Premier League.

The Baggies have snapped up the Liverpool defender on a season-long loan. Wisdom was due to touch down in California this week to meet his new Baggies team-mates after completing his switch from Anfield.

The 21-year-old has already received the seal of approval from Moore, who watched it the England

youth-team man closely last season during his loan stint with Derby.

Wisdom made 34 appearances as the Rams narrowly missed out on promotion, failing to defeat QPR in the Championship play-off final at Wembley.

He impressed Moore, who was a popular figure with both Derby and the Baggies and makes regular checks on both sides.

"I watched a lot of Andre last sea-

son and Derby will be gutted by this news because they were really keen to get him back," said Moore.

"He is a youngster but he is physically equipped to handle the Premier League.

"He is a confident boy and he's pretty good on the ball but his defensive qualities are what really impressed me. His positional sense is very good and I'm sure Liverpool will be delighted with this move."

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